

Australian

Wild

*bushwalking, ski touring
canoeing and climbing magazine*

SPECIAL FEATURE

Himalayan Trekking



Heard Island adventure
Ski touring: getting started, and more
Australian canoeing championships
Ropes survey

WINTER JULY/AUGUST SEPTEMBER 1988 ISSUE 9 \$2.95*

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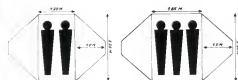
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Brian Walters *Reviews*
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Sandra Bardwell *Track Notes*

Special Advisers Sue Ferrari, Jennie Whinam (ACT), Steve Colman, Dave Noble (NSW), Colin Monteath (NZ), Dave Moss (Qld), Quentin Chester (SA), Bob Burton (Tas), Karen Alexander, John Chapman, John Siseman, Glenn Tempest (Vic)

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Cover David Jeans has captured John Cleary airborne over the Crinoline during his 'flight' from Mt Reynard, Victoria.

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Contributions, preferably well illustrated with photos, are welcome. Guidelines for Contributors are available on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope. Submissions must be typewritten, double-spaced with wide margins, using only one side of the paper, and accompanied by an envelope and sufficient postage for their return. Names and addresses should be written on manuscripts and photos as well. While every care is taken, we accept no responsibility for material submitted. Articles represent the views of the authors, and not necessarily those of the publisher.

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Photo Chris Baxter

Australian **Wild** bushwalking, skitouring canoeing and climbing magazine

July/August/September (Winter) 1983

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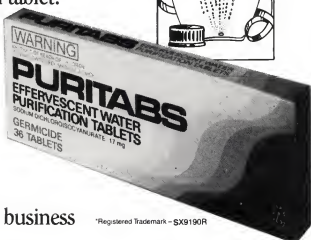
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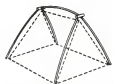
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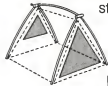


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Editorial

Snow Doubt

● DEVELOPERS ARE ON THE MARCH, AGAIN in the precious alpine regions of Victoria and New South Wales. The go-ahead has been given for the 'development' of Mt Stirling as a downhill ski resort, presumably in a similarly grotesque fashion to that on nearby Mt Buller. Likewise, Dinner Plain, near Mt Hotham, appears to be a lost cause. In New South Wales, work on the Blue Cow Resort is also to proceed.

The Victorian Government has announced its intention to set up an Alpine Resorts Commission to control Victoria's alpine resorts. It is mandatory that wilderness skiing and conservation be properly and effectively represented on this Commission.

Wholesale destruction of the alpine environment by uncaring developers cannot be allowed to continue unchecked. Skiing facilities should be carefully controlled and new accommodation confined to sites below the snow line. The time has come for all caring people to speak out and put an end to this alpine madness.

Striding On!

● THIS ISSUE MARKS THE START OF *WILD'S* third year. We've come a long way since mid-1981 with the help and encouragement of those of you who enjoy the adventure of wild places.

Of those who showed their enthusiasm for the *Wild* idea by subscribing to the new magazine, sight unseen, the great majority have since renewed their subscriptions, many for a further three years. And they have continued to widen the readership of *Wild* by bringing it to the notice of their friends, so our circle of readers continues to grow and becomes increasingly far-flung.

This has enabled us to increase the number of pages from 60 to 100, with many more of them in full colour, and to progressively raise the standard of published material and its presentation. It has enabled us also to encourage writers and photographers by paying full professional rates for the articles and pictures which make the magazine what it is; Australia's independent, authoritative wilderness adventure magazine.

As we set out on our third year I would appreciate any ideas or suggestions you might like to send me for ways of making *Wild* more worthy of wilderness areas.

Wild is a special magazine for special people. Perhaps you could tell us how we might make it more special for you.

Chris Baxter
Editor & Publisher

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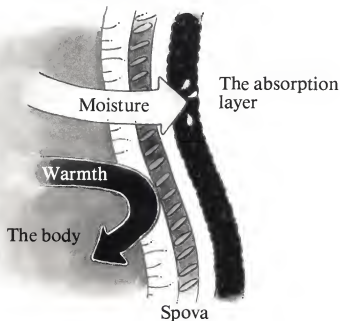
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Wild Information

Bushfire Damage to Walking Areas

• **No Frogs.** The Cannondale Ranges, Queensland, Fauna Survey of the rare marsupial frog, reported in our previous issue, has failed to locate a single specimen. Even its relative, the daytime frog, has not been sighted.

Dave Moss

• **Cruising.** The P & O shipping line, which leases part of Wilson Island in Queensland's Great Barrier Reef National Park, has agreed to restrict use of the island to seasons which do not interfere with the breeding of rare fauna.

DM

• **Wafers.** Access to the esoteric Queensland climbing area, the Whitiwhiti Wafers, has been greatly improved and now takes only ten minutes.

• **Fast Walking.** New South Wales' Three Peaks Outdoor Society members have been at it again. Keith Williams walked from Kiandra to Thredbo in a day. On the way he climbed Round Mountain and Mts Jagungal, Tate, Twynam and Kosciusko.

Peter Treseder has established several pass records. Golden Staircase 5 minutes, Perrys Lookdown 20 minutes, Govetts Leap 25 minutes and Pigeon House 15 minutes.

At the end of April the club held a 24-hour walkathon on the 30 kilometre Benowrie Track which stretches from Pennant Hills to Benowrie, two northern Sydney suburbs. The money raised was used to assist Bushwalkers Search and Rescue, an organization established in 1934 to help people in difficulty in the bush.

Club members aimed to cover the length of the track six times, in relays, and to break the record of one hour 57 minutes.

Beth Ferguson and Peter Treseder

• **New Bungonia Mining Threat.** A Melbourne-based company, Triad Minerals, recently lodged an application to explore for minerals in the vicinity of New South Wales' Bungonia caves. The application covers an area of 64 square kilometres including almost all the Bungonia State Recreation Area, an extremely popular caving region near Goulburn, and part of the Morton National Park. The National Park section includes many spectacular gorges including the Spring Creek Canyon.

A second application has been lodged for upper Ettrema Creek, further east. Much of this area was specifically excluded from the Morton National Park due to its potential for mining.

Ettrema Creek was the site of a drawn-out battle in the late 1970s when conservation groups successfully halted a small mining operation. The present applications have been objected to by many of these groups including the National Parks Association and the Federation of Bushwalking Clubs.

Roger Lambill

• **Kosciusko Huts Removed.** The National Parks and Wildlife Service have recently removed Albina and Rawsons Huts in accordance with the Plan of Management for Kosciusko National Park. The Plan also calls for the removal of Soil Conservation Hut.

Albina Hut, which, it is claimed, was a major source of pollution at Lake Albina, will be replaced by a temporary emergency shelter.

RL



Have you ever seen a tiger walker? Peter Treseder

• **Pyromania in the Kosciusko National Park.** The Hume-Snowy Fire Prevention Scheme in a final filing before preparation of a fire plan for the Kosciusko National Park by the National Parks and Wildlife Service are to conduct 'controlled' burning operations over 50,000 hectares of the Park. This is about 8% of the Park and includes parts of the Fiery Range, the Berrima Range near The Pilot and a number of sub-alpine peat bogs.

Much of the area to be burnt, purportedly in an effort to protect graziers to the west of the Park from fires arising from the Park, is on the western side of the Park. However conservationists claim that virtually every major fire in the area has started in this grazing land and travelled eastwards into the Park. In addition, there were a number of fires started in the Park around the time graziers were being refused permission to graze stock in the Park. One such fire extensively damaged old snow gums and alpine shrubs near the summit of The Pilot.

RL

• **Blue Mountains Fires.** As reported in the previous issue of *Wild*, bushfires burnt out large areas of the Grose Valley. Parts of the area have been closed to bushwalkers.

Later in the summer there were further fires. The major ones affecting New South Wales bushwalking areas were in the Gingra and Bullhead Range in Kanangra-Boyd National Park and the Walga area near Newnes — down to the Capertree River junction.

The fires appeared to have been caused by lightning strikes. The latter fire burned out many of the South Wolgan canyons but the con-

stricted parts of the canyons have been little affected.

Dave Noble

• **Forty Years of Bushwalking.** The Catholic Bushwalking Club of Sydney this year celebrated its 40th anniversary. The CBC is one of the larger and more active of the Sydney bushwalking clubs. Last year it held its 5,000th walk.

To commemorate the anniversary, the Club has produced a book containing articles and many historic photographs, such as one of the Burrangor valley before it was flooded.

DN

• **Blue Mountains Maps.** The Central Mapping Authority is continuing to reprint the old 1:31,680 series of maps in the new scale of 1:25,000. Recently completed sheets include Kurrajong, Springwood, and Mt Wilson. All have been revised and have a contour interval of ten metres (compared with the older edition's 50 foot contour interval).

The Mt Wilson sheet is particularly valuable in its reprinted scale because it now fits on the bottom of the *Wollangambe* 1:25,000, the adjoining sheet to the north. This might save parties becoming geographically misplaced on their way to Bell or Clatterteeth Canyons.

Also about to be printed is a *Wollemi National Park Tourist Map*. This will be the same scale and style as the popular *Blue Mountains and Burrangor Tourist Map*. It will be handy to have all of Wollemi National Park covered on one single topographic sheet.

DN

• **Goulburn River National Park.** The proposed National Park in the Goulburn River area has now been gazetted. The Park has an

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area of about 70,000 hectares. It lies just north of the Wollemi National Park and is the northern extent of the Sydney Basin sandstones.

It contains many basalt areas and a very high concentration of aboriginal sites. The topography is similar to that of the Colo wilderness although generally lower in relief.

DN

● **Australian Wilderness Photography.** An exhibition with this title was held at the University of New South Wales in early May. It was part of a National Heritage Festival which also included debates on environmental issues, films and a benefit bush dance.

● **Reporting.** The 1981-2 NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service's Annual Report is now available for \$4.00 (posted anywhere in Australia) from 189 Kent Street, Sydney 2000.

The report boasts approval of the reservation of three new National Parks and a number of other reserves in 1981-2, and notes that the total area of such Parks and reserves now exceeds 4% of the State.

● **Business as Usual.** Two wilderness adventure companies have recently announced interesting diversifications of their activities. Cooma-based Wilderness Expeditions, managed by *Wild* correspondent Steve Colman, are opening a specialist retail outlet for wilderness equipment.

Adventure travel giant, Australian Himalayan Expeditions, have taken a similar course by marketing adventure travel clothing and equipment, some of it under their own label. They have distributed an extensive mail-order catalogue.

Outdoor Agencies Pty Ltd, one of Australia's major distributors of rucksack sports equipment, have been taken over by the British giant Karrimor International. The new company is known as Karrimor Australia Pty Ltd. Paddy Pallin will still hold a minority interest.

● **Camping.** The inaugural meeting of the Camping Association of Victoria was held at the end of April.

● **Alpine National Park.** The Victorian Alps is a unique and beautiful region urgently in need of protection. The Victorian Government has undertaken to create a large Alpine National Park but this proposal is attracting intense opposition from a number of groups including loggers, graziers, miners and ski resort developers.

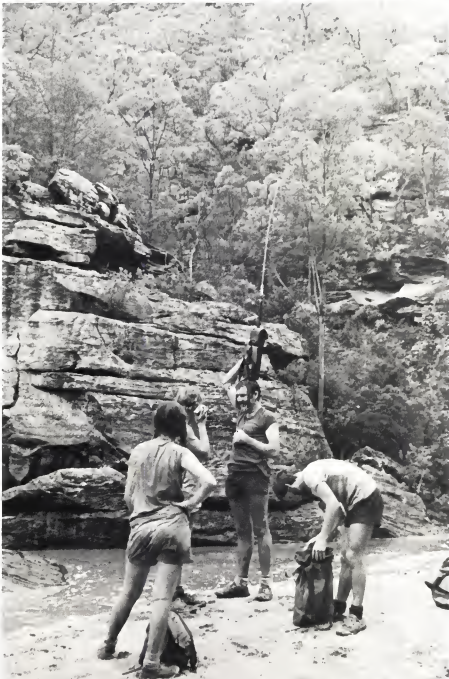
People wishing to counter these threats can write to the VNPA Alpine Campaign Fund, Victorian National Parks Association, 285 Little Lonsdale Street, Melbourne 3000 for information about helping the campaign as a volunteer and/or about organizations involved in the campaign. The VNPA is also seeking donations for the campaign.

● **Rogaining.** The Victorian Championships have been postponed until October when they will be run in conjunction with the Australian Championships. The New South Wales 24-hour rogaine was held in late May in the Hunter Valley.

● **Bogong Road Closure.** Winter access to Victoria's Bogong High Plains from the east is under a question mark. It is reported that the Country Roads Board is to request the closure of the Falls Creek Road at the Omeo Highway junction. (This road is the only one to the Plains from the Omeo side.) Closure of this road would effectively put ski touring access from that side of the Plains out of the question.

● **Trailing Off.** The Victorian Government has announced that legislation to be introduced this

The Goulburn River flows through the newly gazetted New South Wales National park, and right, radios are lifted as high as possible by rescuers to improve reception in New South Wales' Colo Gorge during a search for two bushwalkers last March. Noble



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Photo: John Ruger

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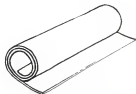
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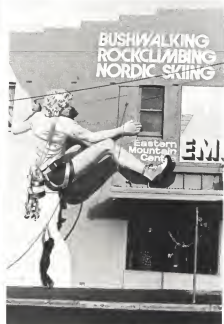
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Top, Lake Selina, part of the area which would be affected by the Henty Anthony Scheme, and above, Melbourne rockclimber at it in the suburbs. Photos Bob Burton and Bill Bachman

winter will strengthen penalties against illegal trail bike riders, streamline court procedures and allow police to require trail bike riders to identify themselves.

The Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Mr Mathews, is quoted as saying that trail bikes have 'caused an immense amount of environmental damage' especially in creek valleys around Melbourne.

• **The Bushfire Season in Victoria.** Last summer saw extensive bushfire damage to

Victoria's bushwalking country. Officers of the Forests Commission of Victoria and the National Parks Service have detailed areas affected:

The Otways — Angahook Forest Park and the Erskine River valley (east of the Erskine Road) completely burnt. The larger part of Lorne Forest Park not affected. About 300 hectares burnt at Moonlight Head, Otway National Park.

The Grampians — Relatively small but very intense fires in the Mt Stapylton-Mt Zero area and Strachans Huts areas.

The Macedon Ranges, Lerderderg Forest Park, Powertown District (east of the town and north of the Noojee Road) — all burnt out.

Mt Buffalo National Park — About 600 hectares burnt in north-west corner of the Park. Cooracambra State Park — About 300 hectares burnt.

Alfred National Park — About 96% of this small Park burnt in the major East Gippsland fire, early March.

Croajingolong National Park — About 60% of the Park burnt early March; narrow coastal strip affected less than the rest of the Park. Of the recognized camping areas, Wangan Inlet the worst affected. Falling trees will constitute a hazard for some considerable time; many roads blocked/impassable. Check with Cann River office before entering the Park.

Gippsland Lakes Coastal Park — Camping areas burnt — 1,500 hectares of the Park in all.

Wyperfeld National Park — Two separate fires in December 1982 burnt over 17,000 hectares, mainly in the eastern half of the Park.

Sandra Bardwell

• **Franklin Film.** Adventure Films, a Melbourne-based company recently finished a 50-minute documentary film on rafting the Franklin River.

A four-man crew spent 17 days on the river between the Collingwood Bridge and the Gordon. They followed the progress of six

rafters led by John Rance. The film includes the walk from Irenabys to Frenchmans Cap and also the interiors of Lowe and Fraser Caves.

The film crew rafted and walked themselves — loading rafts and rucksacks with their 16 millimetre equipment.

Joe Connor

• **Henty Anthony Scheme Gets Green Light.** In a typically Tasmanian way, the Tasmanian Liberal Government announced that it would be proceeding with the Henty Anthony power scheme before the Hydro-Electric Commission has prepared its report to Parliament or completed its investigations.

Premier Gray's announcement is seen by some as an attempt to head off the State Australian Labor Party who were rumoured to be about to change their policy from support of the Gordon-below-Franklin scheme to the Henty Anthony scheme. The Tasmanian ALP, whilst slowly realizing that Tasmania may well not need the power, are eager to pacify west coast unions despite the fact that there are better options for those workers and for Tasmania.

The scheme is to be in a stunningly beautiful alpine region which abuts the Tyndall Range. Despite being partly degraded by mining and HEC access roads, it has tranquil alpine lakes with striking views to the Tyndall and Murchison Range. The area provides some of the easiest alpine walking in Tasmania.

Mr Gray foreshadowed that construction of the scheme would begin in the summer of 1984-5 with the whole project costing in the order of \$185 million and producing 42 megawatts.

Bob Burton

• **Election.** For the Australian outdoors environment much hinged on the outcome of the Federal election. Apart from the much publicized dams issue, the ALP and Democrats had policies concerning the protection of

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Top, Tasmania's Gordon River in more tranquil times, and above, campaigner for the Franklin, Dr David Bellamy in the South-west. Photos Stephen Spurling and Bob Brown

Australia's World Heritage Areas, the protection of Moreton Island from sand mining and other policies relating to woodchipping licences. For their part, the Liberal Party appeared to many conservationists to have an air of total indifference.

However for many the Gordon-below-Franklin was the banner issue which, for the first time, unified environment groups Australia-wide in a campaign to support the parties most sympathetic to the environment; the ALP in the House of Representatives and Democrats in the Senate.

The success of the campaign is hard to assess, but some indication can be gained from the number of voters who followed the National South West Coalition how-to-vote card which had a slight variation on the ALP card. In Diamond Valley (Victoria) 16% of ALP voters followed the NSWC card, as did 15% in Bowman (Queensland) and 14% in Barton (NSW). It is more difficult to establish how many of these would otherwise have voted Liberal, but some indication can be gained from the number of Liberal candidates, including the ex-

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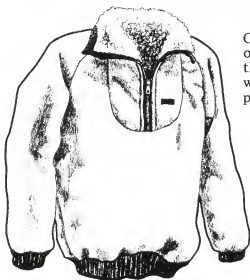
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Treasurer Mr Howard and the Leader of the Country Party Mr Anthony, who blamed a decrease of votes or loss of a seat on the NSW campaign.

All the 13 marginal seats in which the NSW Campaign went to the ALP. In the Senate the Democrats retained their five seats and the balance of power.

BB

• **Mining Ban Lifted.** The moratorium on all development activities in Tasmania's South West Conservation Area was ended recently, to allow mining exploration in the area not protected by National Parks.

The Minister for Mines rationalized this decision by saying that it would be a boost to the chances of Tasmania's unemployed. However he made no mention of the fact that



Mining exploration in Tasmania. Tasmanian Wilderness Society

because the National Parks and Wildlife Service does not have the resources, there is no overall management plan for the area.

The companies which have applied for exploration licence, are BHP, Whites Industries and Shell. It is likely that their survey work will begin next summer.

BB

• **Tasmanian Forest Threat.** The forests of the Huon, Picton and Weld Valleys, earmarked for clear-felling operations, have experienced a slight change of fortune in recent times.

Towards the end of last year Australian Paper Manufacturers announced the two-year closure of their pulp plant at Geeveston. The Tasmanian Government predictably proclaimed that the forest resource of the area must be utilized and advertised for companies willing to take over the concession.

In March, Forest Resources (a subsidiary of HC Sleight) was granted temporary use of the concession until the matter is finalized.

Whether the original plan of logging the South-west's forests, which would directly affect Mt Anne and be visible from Federation Peak, proceeds will depend on the success of conservationists' state-wide forestry campaign to have an alternative plantation plan adopted.

BB

• **Tasmanian Transport.** Hobart's Bushwalkers Transport broke new ground last summer with the introduction of their mini-bus transport service for walkers and rafters in Tasmania. The response to this new service

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Pain and strain in the Macpac Wilderness 1983 Coast to Coast race: 'Sandy' Sandilom at the finish, and below, Dave Pilditch on the kayaking leg. Christchurch Press Company Ltd

was immediate and considerable. Bushwalkers Transport is moving to larger premises and next summer will also offer cheap accommodation, storage facilities and fuel from bulk supplies.

• **Desert Expedition.** In August the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme expedition is to follow the route taken by Charles Sturt in 1844-6 on his famous Central Australian Expedition.

• **Heysen Trail.** As part of South Australia's 150th anniversary celebrations, Andrew Eastick plans to lead a walk the complete length of the Heysen Trail from Cape Jervis to Mt Babbage. He plans to do the walk in eight stages (one each April and September until September 1986), each of eight to ten days.

Peter Beer reports that the recent bushfires (February 1983) have severely affected several important areas of the Heysen Trail, in most cases leaving nothing but bare, scorched ground and blackened tree trunks. Birds and plants no longer exist. The following parts of

the trail have been devastated and will take some years to recover: Mt Magnificent Conservation Park, Kyeema Conservation Park, Kulpiro Forest (southern section), Cleland Conservation Park and Mt Crawford Forest (south of Kersbrook).

Other smaller sections have also been burnt and, sadly, the unique German half-timbered houses at the historic village of Paesttown have been destroyed.

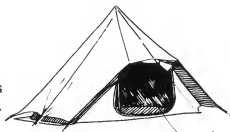
• **Northam's Avon Descent.** Western Australia's classic white water race is to be held this year on 30-31 July. First held in 1972, the event has classes for both power and paddle boats.

• **Biggest Monolith.** According to the 1982 edition of the *Guinness Book of Records*, Western Australia's Mt Augustus is the world's largest isolated monolith.

• **Biggest Ben.** The 1983 Heard Island Expedition reached the summit of Big Ben, on Heard Island, on 8 February 1983. The climb was led by Jonathan Chester. The expedition had sailed from Fremantle on 31 December 1982.

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JANNU 800	Slant Wall	800 g	550 loft down	Full	1.75 kg	— 10°	4 season
JANNU 900	Slant Wall	900 g	550 loft down	Full	1.85 kg	— 15°	4 season/ snow
SUPER FOX	5 Layer	180g/m ² /layer	Polarguard	Side	2.20 kg	— 5°	3 to 4 season
EXPED. ONE	7 Layer	180g/m ² /layer	Polarguard	Side	2.85 kg	— 15°	4 season/ snow

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It is interesting to note that the Director of the Australian Conservation Foundation, Dr Geoff Mosley, has been quoted as saying that Antarctica was the 'number one environment issue' in the 1980s. Australia claims 6.5 million square kilometres, almost half, of Antarctica. Conservation bodies, including the ACF, are calling on the Australian Government to nominate this claim for the World Heritage List.

● **Coasting.** The 1983 Macpac Wilderness Coast to Coast race across New Zealand's South Island, reported in our previous issue, was won by Joe Sherriff in 14 hours, 11 minutes and 42 seconds. Well-known New Zealand mountaineer Graeme Dingle came second with 14.14.34 and was the 'first veteran'. (It might have been embarrassing if Dingle, a director of Macpac's major competitor, Hallmark International, had won Macpac's race!) The first woman in was Stella Sweeney with 17.13.37. (She was 34th overall.) The (two-man) teams division was won by Hans Stegehuis and Don Stewart in 13.59.56.



Makalu, the West Ridge faces the camera. Peter Hillary

● **Australian Himalayan News.** Four climbers are leaving for Nepal in late July to attempt the most significant climb yet attempted by Australians in the Himalayas. Fred From and Mark Moorhead, with leading New Zealand climbers Bill Denz and Peter Hillary, will attempt the West Ridge of Makalu, 'the Walker Spur of the Himalayas', Alpine style. At 8,481 metres, Makalu is the world's fifth highest mountain. The West Ridge has been climbed twice before, by large expeditions: a strong French expedition in 1971 and an American team in 1980.

Fred From managed to get some exposure on Queensland television in March to promote this costly enterprise and his planned Mt Everest expedition next year. Part of the programme showed Fred climbing on Mt Tibrogargal in the Glasshouse Mountains.

Late last year Colin Pont and Mick Chapman climbed Kwangde Shar (6,279 metres) whilst on an Australian trekking trip.

In late March, 12 Australians travelled to the Himalayas on a hang-gliding expedition to the Annapurna region. Organized by Chris Dewhurst, and led by Ian Jarman, it is the first hang-gliding expedition to Nepal.

● **Film.** The Kendal (UK) Mountaineering Film Festival held in February included *A Taste of Honey*, a film of three climbs at Victoria's Mt Arapiles.

● **Corrections.** In our seventh issue we mentioned an unconfirmed report of an Australian party climbing Mt McKinley's Cassin Ridge. It now seems that there was no such ascent, but Australian Ray Vran reached the summit on three occasions by the West Buttress and reached the summit plateau by the West Rib.

The photo on page five of our eighth issue credited to 'Geoff Bull' was taken by Geoff Bell.



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For your first few ventures into the snow it's probably best to hire or borrow your ski gear. This will allow you to make a better choice when the time comes to buy your own.

If you are lucky you may have an experienced skiing friend who is patient enough to get you started. Alternatively you can enrol

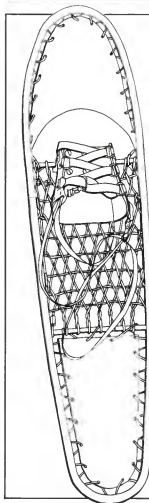
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th Steve Colman



in a cross country skiing course run by a qualified instructor.

Beginning with good instruction pays dividends. The techniques you learn will become the foundations of an efficient and relaxed skiing style. Unfortunately self- (or friend-) taught skiers often develop bad techniques which can be extremely difficult to correct at a later stage.

When and where to go. The cross country skiing season normally gets under way in early to mid June, depending on snowfalls. After a good winter it's not uncommon to still have good skiing in early November.

Where to ski is very much a matter of personal taste and your nearest snow-fields.

When beginning, all you need is a relatively flat terrain with maybe a small hill. On this area you can get the feel of the skis before taking on something more ambitious.

Choosing your equipment. In looking at equipment I'll try and explain the design aspects which will influence your choice. Naming individual brands can be misleading due to constant design changes. It's a good idea to speak with experienced skiers and ski shop sales people to help you narrow your choice when you do decide to buy.

Wax or non-wax skis? When beginning, choose a non-wax ski. Although not (as yet) offering the same performance as a well waxed ski, they are reasonably hassle-free. Learn

True wilderness touring: the Main Range from the Grey Mare Range, New South Wales. Erik Westrup

to ski first then, if you wish, buy waxing skis and have a try.

As to which non-wax base is the best, they all work to varying degrees depending on snow conditions. In general, most of the better known ski brands have a reasonable non-wax base.

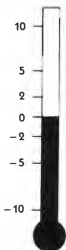
Metal edges. Unless you are a confirmed overnight tourer don't begin on metal edged skis. They may be better in icy conditions with a pack on but they do have a few disadvantages.

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and increase the likelihood of cutting up your new boots. Anyway, when beginning, your techniques generally aren't refined enough to use the edges properly.

Skis. It used to be simple — a choice between a couple of brands of wooden skis.

Nowadays the boom in ski touring popularity has produced an amazing and somewhat confusing array of skis, stocks and boots. You can choose between narrow featherweight racing skis through to wide metal-edged mountain skis.

Ideally you should start to narrow your choice by deciding what style of skiing most interests you. Do you want to race, ski on trails, go on overnight and extended tours or just head off for gentle day tours? If you are uncertain about which style of skiing you want to pursue, hire or borrow some ski gear and experiment before you buy your own.

For most people taking up cross country skiing, orientation is towards day touring, with the possible potential for something more ambitious later. It is therefore to day touring that I direct most attention.

The ski to look for has the following characteristics. Length should be between 15 and 20 centimetres taller than you are. A common rule for length has been from the floor to the upraised wrist, but the shorter length will provide an easy introduction. Ski length is not a hard and fast rule; it may vary to suit a skier's weight, experience and physical fitness.

The advantages of a shorter ski are less weight and easier turning. The disadvantages are that they are slower and do not have as much buoyancy in soft snows. However, for the beginner being slow can be a decided advantage.

The width of the ski is also important. For beginners a wide ski provides stability. To help the skier turning characteristics some side cut is needed. This is the difference in ski width between the tip, middle and tail. Quite simply the greater the side cut the more easily the ski will turn. A typical ski width for general touring, plus or minus a couple of millimetres, is a 65 millimetre tip, 55 millimetre waist and 62 millimetre tail.

Another aspect of ski design to be aware of is camber. This is the upward arch of the middle of the ski. When the ski is weighted this is forced down into contact with the snow. The softer the camber the easier it can be flattened on the snow. Without going into the technical details, a soft cambered ski is also easier to turn.

Many cross country skis have a very stiff or even double camber. To test the camber put the skis base to base and try and squeeze them flat. If it takes both hands and quite a lot of force to flatten the bases, they are stiff or double cambered. Cross country skis should slide forward when you are gliding or skiing downhill, but grip the snow and not slip backward when you push off (kick) against them or are climbing. The advantage of a stiff or double cambered ski is that it only allows the middle and gripping section of the ski base to be in contact with the snow during the kick and not during the glide. This makes for a faster ski, as the 'sticky' middle section of the base is only in contact with the snow when needed. This is a decided advantage for technically good skiers in a prepared track.

The main disadvantage is that stiff cambered skis are difficult to turn.

One of the best tests of a ski's turning capabilities is to hold the tip and, with the tail on the floor, push the middle of the ski into a reverse camber. (This is imitating what hap-

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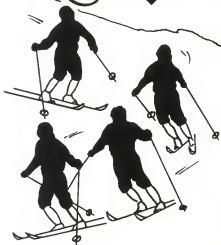
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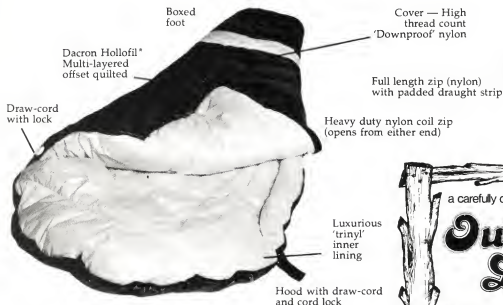
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Ski tourers in the Mt Kosciuszko region. On the Ramshead, and below, near Mt Twynnam. Steve Colman

pens to the ski under the pressures of centrifugal force when turning.)

The smoother the curve of the ski in this reverse camber position the better the ski's turning characteristics.

This presents us with a problem. To travel in straight lines a stiff camber is an advantage, while to have ease of turning downhill a softer camber is preferred.

The all-purpose ski doesn't exist, so it's up to you to decide what ski will best suit your needs: a stiff or double cambered longer ski with minimum side cut for track or trail touring, versus a shorter, wider, softer cambered ski with side cut for more general touring and turning.

I like to turn.

Ski boots. I consider boots the most important piece of equipment. The key element is that they be laterally stiff. This means a minimum amount of flex of the heel sideways on the ski. Because the boot is only attached

at the toe, any sideways pressure applied on the boot (as happens when turning) must be transmitted to the ski. Not, as often happens, with the boot bending off the side of the ski and a lack of real control (and some great falls) resulting.

Most light boots are not laterally stiff. To date it seems that only the heavier, well-sewn, thick-soled boots fit the bill.

Yet again we run into a conflict. If you are skiing in tracks on light skis you don't need a lot of heel contact as the set track looks after your direction.

However if you're setting off on untracked snow it's nice to have every bit of control possible.

Heavier boots also have other advantages. They offer greater warmth as your feet stay drier. They are also better for walking in to reach the snow, as is often the case in early and late season skiing.

Their main disadvantage is that they are heavy and expensive, but I accept that for the extra control and warmth they provide.

Ski stocks. Stocks should be long enough

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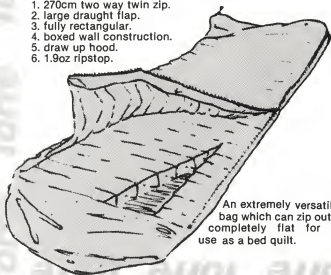
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to fit snugly under your armpit with the basket in the snow. Most people ski with stocks that are too short.

Choices in materials range from tonkin cane, fibreglass through to expensive alloys. For a start I would opt for fibreglass for both durability and strength. Make sure that the wrist strap is adjustable, so as to cater for different gloves you might wear. Larger baskets offer greater support in deep snow.

Bindings. A variety of different sizes exists. Choose a 75 millimetre binding to begin with unless you are planning to only race or track tour. Most models are simple and efficient. An alternative that was popular for touring and is making a comeback is cable bindings. With this system the boot is held in the toe binding by a spring cable round the heel of the boot. This helps to solve the problem of lack of lateral control.

Accessories. Heel locators are an advantage. They work with a pin in the back of the boot slotting into a V section on the ski. In other words, when your heels are flat on the ski (as in turning) the boot can't flex off the ski. Quite simple and effective.

Safety straps. The consequences of a lost ski can be dangerous. If you are travelling in terrain where a ski might 'run away', use straps from your ankle to the binding.

Clothing. It's important that you be comfortable. Choose clothing that will maintain its warmth when wet (such as wool or fibrepile).

Try and dress in a number of layers so that you can easily regulate your body temperature to cope with heat and cold. The most common mistake beginners make is to wear too much clothing. This often creates an internal sauna which results in feeling cold from the cooling effect of perspiration.

Your two most critical items of clothing are a waterproof jacket and overtrousers. The jacket should have a hood and extend below the hips, while ideally the overtrousers should have zips on the sides to allow them to go on and off without removing your skis. Other things to remember are a good beanie, balaclava, gloves and waterproof overmitts.

Unless you're an Eskimo you will also need sunglasses (goggles are handy in bad weather).

What to take for your day's touring. All the above clothing plus, a whistle (to blow for help in case you get lost), compass and map (which you should be able to use confidently). Energy food such as nuts, dried fruit, chocolate and fruit cake. Drink; ski touring is thirsty work and it is easy to dehydrate; allow a minimum of one litre per person per day. Small first aid kit, including anti-sunburn cream. Spare ski tip (make sure it will fit), penknife, screwdriver to fit ski bindings, matches or gas lighter. A few spare plastic bags. Bivvy bag/groundsheet — provides some shelter if caught out. Waxes if needed. Common sense and especially an understanding of the causes of, and coping with, hypothermia. This should all fit in a comfortable day pack.

Before going on a day tour notify a responsible person as to the trip details and what to do if you haven't returned by a given time.

Another good rule is to tour with a minimum of four people. It may be a good idea to start out with a ski touring club; contact a local outdoor shop for details.

As a final suggestion there are some excellent books on cross country skiing. In particular I would recommend *Cross Country Skiing* by Ned Gillette, and if you are an advanced skier try *Mountain Skiing* by Vic Bein.

Happy touring . . . •

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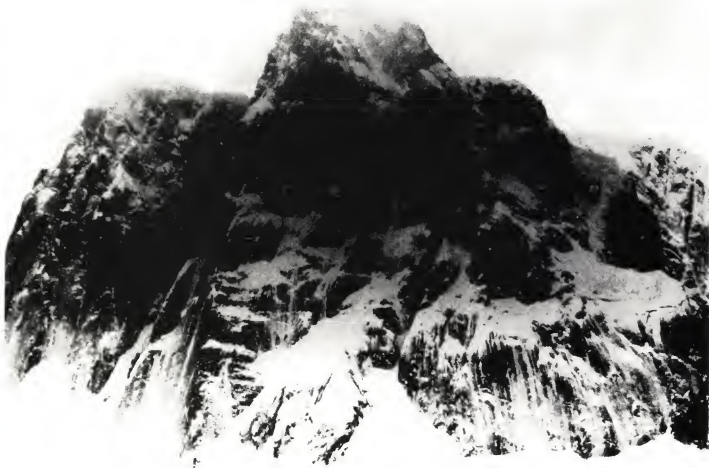
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● GEAR FREAKING IS THE MOST rapidly growing aspect of the rucksack sports. Its phenomenal growth has recently been documented by a post-graduate student at the Institute for Recreation Studies at Philip Institute of Technology. He found a growth rate of 29.3% a month, far greater than all the rucksack sports put together. This explosive growth is clearly a phenomenon of some importance and a multi-disciplinary task force has been formed to research the subject further.

Already we are beginning to see problems emerge. At our Recreation Counselling Centre we are getting an increasing number of patients whose problem is described as 'equipment anxiety'. They already outnumber contrite trail bike riders by an order of magnitude. The typical profile, established by our team of sociologists and psychiatrists, is a single male in his early or mid twenties. Much, if not all, of his spare time and money is spent gear freaking, yet he is acutely worried that he is not keeping up with the latest trends. Fortunately such chronic cases are rare, but it is obvious that they are indicative of a wider problem which this article attempts to solve by giving a scheme for scoring yourself, for answering that worrying question, 'How am I going?'

Catalogues. Collecting catalogues is the hallmark of the gear freak.

● Score 10 points for each current American catalogue which you own. They must be no less than 20 pages and

in full colour. Score an extra 5 points for each for which you are on the mailing list.

● Score 5 points for each catalogue from any other source.

● Score double points for any catalogue you take on trips.

Reading Habits.

● Score 10 points each if you subscribe to any of the following magazines:

Mountain Climber and Rambler
Alpinismus
Wild
Mountain Equipment Monthly

● Score 5 points if you habitually borrow any of the above or read them at the newsagent.

● If, on receiving this copy of *Wild*, you 1 Looked at the back cover first — score 10.

2 Turned straight to this article — score 9.

3 Read all the equipment advertisements — score 8.

4 Read the contents page — score 7.

Imported Equipment.

● Score 10 points for each piece of equipment imported by you in the past two years.

● An item sent by a friend overseas or brought back by a relative or friend scores 5 points.

Clothing. A short time ago this would have been easy. The possession of a down jacket and a Gore-Tex parka put you in the big league. Now with in-

ulated jackets available from every disposal store, some of the mystique has been lost. So,

● Score 20 points if you bought your down jacket before 1980. (Fibrefill and Hollowfill also qualify.)

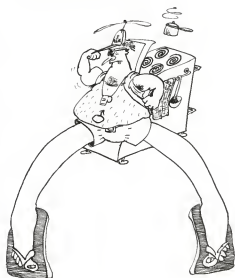
● Each zip-off sleeve scores 5 points.

● A fibrepile jacket now scores only 5 points.

● Gore-Tex parkas are holding up well. Score 10 points for yours. But Gore-Tex overpants are better — score 15. Score 5 points for any other Gore-Tex clothing — anklets, gaiters, underwear, etc.

● All items of Lifa or chlorofibre underwear score 5 points, except those with a windproof front panel, which rate 10.

● The big item for the first half of 1983 is a Thinsulate jacket. Score 20 points for an ordinary one and 30 points for one with a Gore-Tex cover.



Footwear.

● Top-of-the-range marathon running shoes rate 10 points, provided they have been reviewed in *Runner's World* in the past four months.

● Score 15 points if your boots are the same as used on the last expedition to an 8,000 metre peak.

Sleeping Gear. The important thing with sleeping bags is to have lots of them, to refer to them as 'my two seasons bag' or some other such endearment, and to either know the bird which provided the down personally or have shares in the factory which made the synthetic filling.

● Score 5 (N-2) points, where N is the number of bags you own.

● If your bag is rated at T°C, then score -T points (e.g. a -5°C bag earns 5 points). If you don't know the rating, lose 10 points.

● Your Therm-a-Rest scores 10 points if bought before June 1981 and 5 points otherwise.

Packs. You also need lots of these and we usually advise buying at least two a year. With new designs continually appearing it is impossible to score by model in a brief article. The recommended system is:

● Score 5 (N-2) where N is the number of packs you own.

● Score 2 points for each equipment patch.

● Score 5 points for each detachable pocket.

Tents. Extensive research has shown that there is only one significant feature. This is the number of fibreglass rods in your tent. Score 2 points for each separate piece. Add 50% for hollow rods.

Cooking. This is a fertile field and a

whole article should be (and has been) written about it. MSR stoves are still worthwhile — score 5 points for yours, with an extra 5 points for the multi-fuel model. If you run it on peanut oil, get another 5 points.

Coleman Peak stoves score 10 points. Each Sigg billy is worth 5 points, provided it is not blackened.

Skis. This is a critical area, as a glance at any magazine will show. Rapid changes in design, materials and colours have made the going hard for all but the most dedicated gear freaks. The currently accepted scoring system is:

● Score 5 (N-3), where N is the average number of pairs of skis bought per year, averaged over the last three years.

● The new microprocessor skis are worth 15 points.

● Heel locators are essential. The V notch type rates 10 points if bought before 1981 and 5 points thereafter. Voile locators rate 15 points.

● Carbon fibre poles are worth 10 points, but only if you actually bought them.

Disposals. Subtract 10 points for each item of ex-army equipment, irrespective of which army it was used by. There is only one exception — British army or air force sweaters with cloth shoulder patches score 3.

Lifestyle. This can be discussed under four headings: conversation, leisure activities, occupational goals and holiday preferences.

Conversation for gear freaks is essentially a branch of bush gamesmanship, so ably described by M Griffin in *Waik* (1979). The difference is that the gear freak has only one subject and never tires of it. Imagine two people meeting.

A non-gear freak would say something like, 'G'day. Where have you come from?' The gear freak, however, opens thus: 'Is that a pair of . . . you're wearing?' I saw them reviewed in *Mountain Equipment Monthly* (produces copy). What do you think of them? The correct reply is, 'Yes, I imported them from Patagonian Mountain Equipment. Only got them a month ago. Still, I think the new model will be better and I've ordered one.' I leave it to you to imagine how this conversation might continue. The winner of the exchange scores 10 points.

Leisure activities relate to the use of lunch-times and after work. Score two points for every lunch-time or after hours shopping period a week which you spend in equipment shops. Score an extra 5 points if some of the staff think you are on the staff, and an extra 10 points if the management think you are on the staff.

For occupational goals, score as follows:

● Owner of a gear shop — 3 points.

● Full-time employee in a gear shop — 5 points.

● Part-time employee in a gear shop — 7 points.

● Part-time employee in a gear shop and equipment consultant to a school outdoor education programme — 10 points.

Holiday preferences are another guide to gear freaking prowess. If your preferred use of your annual leave is:

● A long trip — score 2 points.

● Instructing at a Department of Youth, Sport & Recreation course — score 4 points.

● Equipment officer for a DYRS course — score 7 points.

● A tour of gear shops on the USA west coast at sale time — score 15 points.

Your Total Rating. Add your total score; this is your rating. A rough guide to its significance is:

More than 500: You are an arch gear freak and probably beyond help.

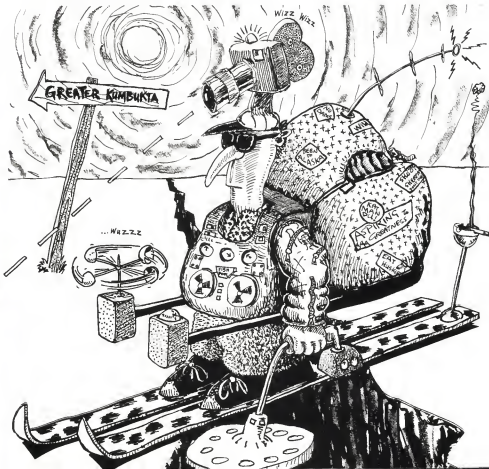
401 to 500: As a master gear freak, you are well known in all main shops and always have the latest gear.

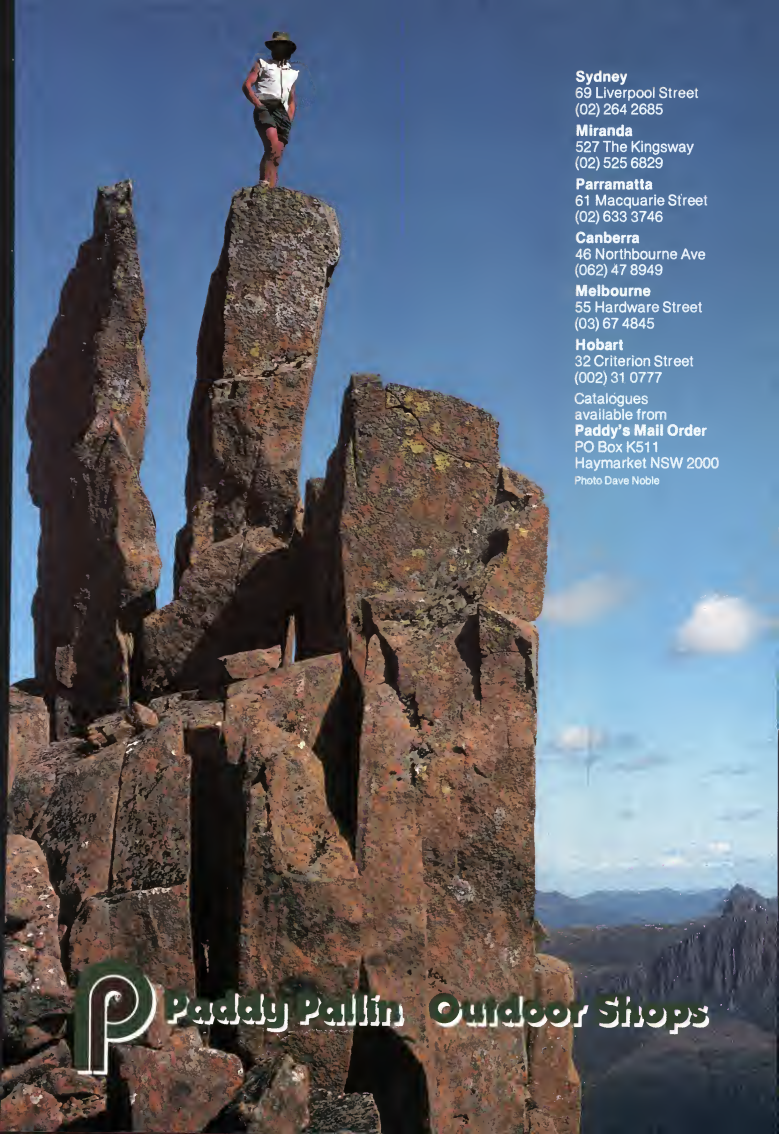
301 to 400: You are an experienced gear freak, although you are a little behind. You go on trips mainly to test equipment. You should spend more time reading catalogues and visiting gear shops.

201 to 300: Average gear freaks like you tend to be rather anxious in the company of higher grade freaks. You probably spend more time on trips than gear freaking. You should memorize all advertisements in this magazine.

101 to 200: As an armchair gear freak you have a large catalogue collection and you attend club meetings mainly to discuss equipment.

Less than 100: You are only a novice gear freak but the fact that you have read this far shows that you have higher aspirations. Keep trying. ●



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Fire and Ice

A full-page photograph of a mountaineer with a large purple backpack climbing a steep, snow-covered mountain slope. The climber is wearing a light-colored jacket and red gaiters. The background shows a vast, icy landscape under a clear blue sky.

Stormy oceans, penguins and an Antarctic volcano: the Australian expedition to Big Ben's remote and steamy summit was everyone's idea of an adventure, by Meg Thornton and Jonathan Chester.

● THE HEARD ISLAND EXPEDITION SAILED from Fremantle on 31 December 1982. Aboard the expedition yacht *Anaconda II*, were 20 people bound for a three-month journey to Heard Island, a remote Australian territory that lies below the Antarctic Convergence. The island is dominated by sub-antarctic weather patterns and is sheathed in glaciers. Ice cliffs form the greater part of the coastline. An ascent of Mawson Peak, the volcanic cone atop Big Ben, at 2,758 metres Australia's highest summit, was one of the main objectives of the expedition.

Heard Island is a remote speck in a very large ocean. The journey, all 4,000 kilometres of it, was a major element in the expedition plans. The idea of sailing in *Anaconda* gradually became not just a mode of transport but a summit, a goal, an adventure in itself. The lure of Heard Island was only one element in the excitement.

Anaconda is one of the largest yachts in Australia, but our strange load of climbing gear and tents, skis and snow shoes, scientific equipment and medical kits soon filled her to the limit. We looked forward to three weeks of sailing from Fremantle. Three hours on watch, three hours below, hot bunking, a cycle repeated relentlessly all day, all night, for three weeks. This system strained us physically; there was never quite enough sleep, certainly no time for writing, discussions and reading which it was hoped would be a focus of the voyage.

The early going was balmy, with sun-filled days and starry, starry nights. We gradually became familiar with the spider's web of rigging, the intricate choreography of sail changes and the odd tricks such as sleeping in the hammocks formed by the sails tied down on deck, or hiding behind the main mast during the skipper's tirades.

When we hit 40° the whole balance of weather and ocean was tipped. Waves came crashing over the bow, we were heeled right over, mains' reefed, staysail and No 3 Yankee up. The sudden crack and whiplashing as a sail ripped became a familiar sound, initiating another sail change and long hours at the sewing machine. Heavy wet weather gear over fibrepile was essential, and the sail changes became exercises in endurance. It was tough, working in bare hands on the wet sails and sheets as the bow rose five metres and then crashed down into the next wave. We called this 'revelling' — up on the foredeck, rain, crashing waves, on your knees tying down the acres of wet sail, and the skipper yelling from the cockpit, his voice carried away by the wind.

After leaving Fremantle we sighted no other ships and the rest of the world may

not have existed. We were a complete and closed microcosm, carrying all water, fuel, food and gear; very conscious of our meagre supplies of each. The black market dealings in Violet Crumbles and Gauloise cigarettes thrived during the midnight watches, and a hot drink on deck became the most craved luxury.

The potential for exercise and training was, however, limited. Unlike most Himalayan expeditions where the walk-in is a steady build-up and acclimatization period, the short bursts of activity on the yacht did not keep us fit. But we became

become all too familiar with in the previous months. The first encounters with King Penguins and slothful Elephant Seals were coloured with the childish joy of discovery. We also rediscovered the benefits of a whole night's sleep, the ease of cooking on a horizontal stove and eating from a horizontal bowl.

While the amateur radio operators set up at Atlas Cove, *Anaconda* took us to the eastern end of the island, sailing beneath the massive glacial cliffs, but there was still no glimpse of the elusive summit through the clouds. Skua Beach offered



fully acclimatized to wind and wet and cold.

It was in that state, with a cloud ceiling at about 300 metres that we first sighted Heard. It was not the 'giant iceberg' that Captain Heard described in his journal in 1853, but a line of black cliffs and jagged

a rare sandy landing and soon our little city of coloured tents became a tenuous refuge from the squalls and gusts that sweep the island.

During the next two weeks, the route to Long Ridge was established. Field trips around the coast were made to explore and document wildlife, and samples of plants and rocks were collected for our scientific programmes. Extremes of weather and snow conditions made all these tasks difficult. The one reliable and predictable aspect of Heard Island weather was constant change, and it was against this background that Jonathan Chester and Martin Hendy made a bid for the summit.

The sudden crack and whiplashing as a sail ripped became a familiar sound.

ridges dropping out of the cloud to the waterline. Strange rock formations stood on these ridges like sentinels, marking our approach. Darkness and cloud descended as we dropped anchor in Atlas Cove. Cracking a bottle of rum in the aft cockpit, the Island's features assumed a strange familiarity derived from hours spent studying them in two dimensions on the maps.

The next days were a blur of unpacking, moving, loading, sorting ... tasks we had

At a few hundred metres below the apparent rim of the volcano the route ahead looked straightforward, but the weather was not so auspicious. Cirrus cloud was gathering by the hour, and one certain lesson of mountain experience is to heed the signs. Jonathan related the story of the climb.

Frozen waves of wind-blown snow rimmed the volcano's caldera like extravagant icing on a giant wedding cake. Safely belayed by Martin, I climbed gingerly up to the edge of the caldera. The

On the lower reaches of Long Ridge with its frighteningly loose volcanic rock. Above, King Penguin rookery: magnificence amidst an overpowering stench! Chester



sutrugi structures fanning out round the rim were astounding. Perfectly formed tunnels of ice, like pipelines in the surf, had been sculptured by a prevailing wind of unimaginable force. We wasted no time in fixing an anchor of ice screws and abseiled down off the rim, across a bergschrund, and into the caldera basin — the inner sanctum of the volcano. The central summit cone of Mawson Peak was just visible through the mist. In the shadow of the 'hogsback' clouds we traversed several kilometres of the basin in rapid time. Arriving at the base of the summit cone we felt weary but optimistic: ascent of the upper slopes of 'Australia's highest peak' appeared eminently feasible.

Work towards the achievement of this position had begun 12 days earlier when Rob, Martin and Mike made a preliminary

The first encounters with King Penguins and slothful Elephant Seals were coloured with the childish joy of discovery.

foray on to the mountain and had a grim initiation into the fickle extremes of Heard Island weather. They made camp after a day of reconnaissance, and built a wall of snow blocks round the tent to break the wind. As a storm developed, falling snow turned to driving rain which steadily eroded the snow walls. By three o'clock in the morning they were struggling to support the alloy wands of the tent against lashing 60 knot winds. The shredded tent was eventually abandoned and the remaining hours of the tempest were spent huddled in the lee of a nearby rock ridge.

This experience confirmed our conviction of the necessity for more secure accommodation and, as is often the case in the mountains, a snow cave proved to be the best refuge. In preparation for the assault on the summit, several days were spent excavating a cave that boasted three bedrooms, a walk-in kitchen and separate vestibule. Ross and Steve toiled to dig storage and other amenities, and this lavish dwelling was a stable springboard during the five-day search for a practical route up to the crest of Long Ridge.

The planned line of ascent, worked out

Anaconda II from halfway up the mizzen. Top right, bivouac in the caldera bergschrund in temperatures of down to -20° C. Right bottom, one of the expedition's inflatable boats below Heard Island's formidable coastal ice cliffs. Photos Chester, and right bottom, Bill Blunt





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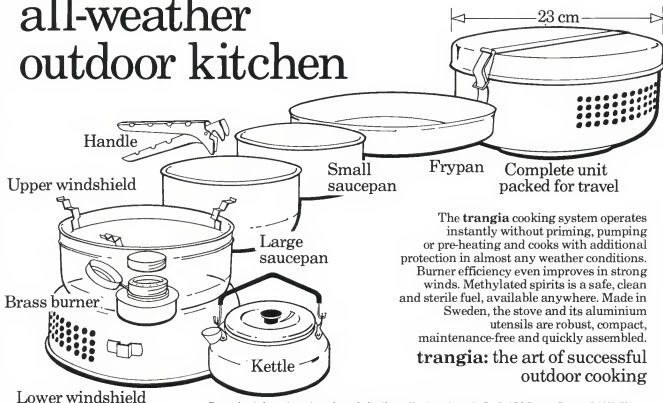
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Lowe Mountain Packs

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on aerial photographs back in Sydney, proved impassable. The barrier was a 50 metre band of vertical choss. To use this treacherous wall of loosely connected volcanic cinders as a load-carrying route was out of the question. Long before arriving on Heard Island, Bill and Ross had decided that it was no place to risk an Alpine-style ascent. The likelihood of storms that rage for a week or more, and the acute isolation of the island, were key factors in deciding upon siege tactics for the climb. This approach required the selfless commitment of everyone to the labours of load carrying, establishing camps and route finding, and beyond this team effort there was the extended family of many hundreds who had worked tirelessly, and given generously, to make this expedition possible.

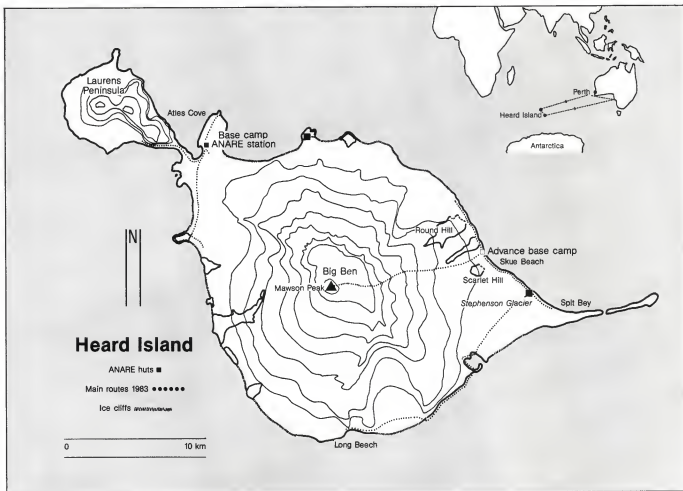
The final line of ascent avoided the unhealthy rock band by skirting along the base of the ridge, and an intricate route weaving up among crevasses and steep ice cliffs brought us at last to easier ground. This passage negotiated unnerving country: glaciers move with uncommon speed on this castaway island. In the course of fixing ropes and placing food dumps, whole slopes could change overnight. After the dangers of the approach, the environment above was relatively free from objective hazards.

Finding the true summit was quite perplexing. Far from being an unequivocal Big Ben, showing the line of ascent, Long Ridge, on the right skyline. Steve Tremont

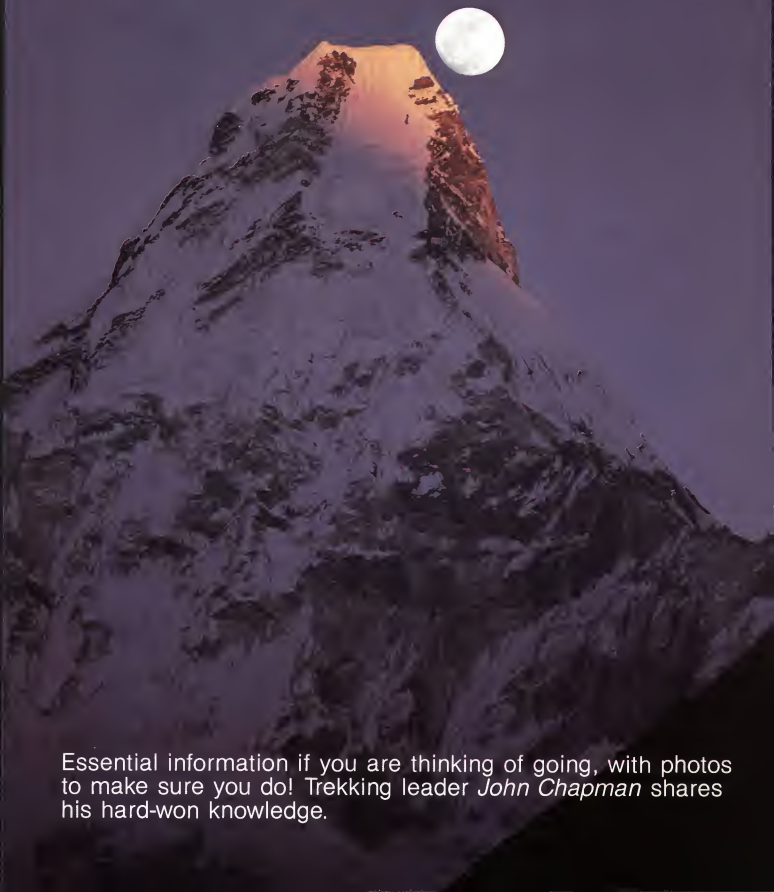
apex to the mountain there was a jumble of depressions and waves of ice abutting snow-free rocks. Eventually a small tunnel through a bergschrund gave passage to the very top of Australia. Ice caving was rather an unusual way to make the summit, but then this was quite an unusual mountain. Sulphurous gas assailed our nostrils as we scrambled up the volcanic choss, and steam issued from a maze of small openings. The

surrounding rocks were quite hot to the touch — a chocolate bar laid on one such vent turned soft and sticky.

A swirling mist obscured any view, but just being there was enough. An Australian flag was unfurled and we celebrated with appropriate photographs. It was the first time either of us had taken part in a display of summit patriotism but it seemed the only fitting acknowledgment of a unique situation. ●



Himalayan Trekking



Essential information if you are thinking of going, with photos to make sure you do! Trekking leader *John Chapman* shares his hard-won knowledge.

● **NEPAL AND ITS CAPITAL CITY,** Kathmandu, are still magic words for travellers. Until recently this tiny kingdom was closed to visitors and very few actually got to Kathmandu, but during the 1950s the borders were opened and foreigners were able to experience the unique culture of this tiny country.

The most obvious attraction of Nepal is its spectacular mountain landscape. The Himalayan mountain chain forms the northern border of the country and includes most of the world's highest peaks, including Mt. Everest. These mountains dominate the skyline of the entire country which varies from tropical jungles to high alpine pastures, all within a width of 150 kilometres. However there is much more to this kingdom than dramatic landscape, for it is the people and their culture that have the greatest influence on visitors.

Nepal is poised at the meeting point of several different Asian cultures. Here the Buddhist and Hindu religions exist together and the Indian and Tibetan cultures are intermingled. The people are from several distinct ethnic groups and an even greater variety of cultural groups. The continually changing culture is most noticeable on trek as you move through the different groups, and because Nepal was isolated for many years the culture has altered little for centuries.

Why Go Trekking? This is really the only way to see Nepal. Even in the short period that the country has been open to the rest of the world, the major cities of Kathmandu and Pokhara have become noticeably westernized. To see the original culture of the people it is necessary to live among the villages in rural Nepal. There are very few roads, so walking is the only way to see most of the country. Trekking is also the only way to get close to the huge mountains.

What is Trekking? First let's dispel some myths. It is not climbing or bushwalking; it is simply walking among the villages, fields and foothills of the mountains, travelling from village to village and staying in lodges or tents. It can be as easy or as difficult as you wish to make it, with most trekkers choosing an easy, relaxed walk. You are not walking in a wilderness as bushwalkers do, but are travelling in heavily populated, rural country. You should be aware of local attitudes and standards because you are travelling through someone's backyard all the time. Tracks are usually of a good standard and easy to follow once found, but many cause confusion by radiating in all directions from each village. Still it is fun trying to ask directions in Nepali and trying to interpret the fifty-word reply!

Which Method of Trekking? This is relatively simple because there are four basic ways of trekking in Nepal. They

range from fully organized groups in which everything is carried for you, to carrying your own possessions yourself. Each has its own particular benefits but whichever you choose will be a unique experience.

Australian Trekking Company. This is the most popular method with first-time trekkers and deservedly so. Organization is easy: just select a trek on set dates with a reliable company, pay the deposit and let the company arrange the details. The company will require you to fill out several forms and supply your passport; they will sort out all the details

local trekking company. A Sirdar is then supplied who employs crew to do the necessary jobs. If, however, you obtain a poor Sirdar, the system is full of hassles: indeed even some large climbing expeditions have encountered problems. As there are about 70 trekking companies in Kathmandu you are taking pot luck, and I don't advise you do it this way unless you know in advance of some reliable trekking companies.

Advantages are that you can tailor the trek to suit yourself (or the group), and are able to alter the itinerary as you wish. And you can do without luxuries



including necessary visas. The company also arranges for all the equipment, including your personal bag, to be carried, cooks the meals and has a team of Sherpas to look after the needs of the group members.

There are many advantages in this type of trek. A good standard and variety of food is cooked in a manner similar to which Europeans are accustomed. Because the group is self-sufficient, the trek can easily pass through less visited (and often very interesting) areas where little local food is available. It is possible to share and compare experiences with companions from your own culture as well as to become friends with some of the Nepali crew and hence learn something about local cultures.

Disadvantages are that a fixed schedule must be followed and there is less interaction with the locals in the areas you pass through because you are doing just that, passing through.

Trekking Company in Nepal. This is essentially the same as using a trekking agency in Australia and while potentially cheaper is sometimes dearer for the unwary. The trekker flies (or whatever) to Kathmandu and there approaches a

(such as tables and chairs) to save expense.

The main disadvantage occurs if you obtain a poor Sirdar and find it necessary to pay extra along the trail to solve problems such as porter strikes. Also, the cooks are of unknown quality and are less likely to be trained to cook for Europeans.

Hiring Porters and Living Off the Land. This can be significantly cheaper if you are prepared to eat local food which is lentils, rice and potatoes. Generally, you hire a porter or two to carry your pack, walk with only your day pack, and live and eat in the tea houses and lodges along the way. It is possible to carry your own gear, but after a few days you will realize that the cost of a porter (\$2 to \$4 per day) is a very cheap investment to ease your back and enable you to enjoy the scenery and people around you.

Advantages of this method of trekking are that you have no fixed itinerary and can go anywhere within the constraints of your trek permit (more on that later) and are therefore able to visit villages, festivals or other happenings. There is a high degree of interaction with the local

Moonrise over Ama Dablam. Above, chortens on the trail to Mt Everest. Chapman. Over, Kashmiri children, Jeffrey Campbell







people as you are obtaining your food from them, and you are able to form friendships more easily with trekkers from other countries.

On the negative side, you will find that only the more popular routes, where food and lodging are available, are suitable for this approach. The food offered usually lacks variety and there is a greater risk of having some of your possessions stolen. You must also hire or bring your own sleeping bags, down jacket and other necessities.

Carrying Your Own Gear and Food. This is the way the bushwalker would attempt to see the country and it is usually disastrous. The method involves taking all your own lightweight food, tent, stove and cooking utensils. It breaks an important unwritten rule in that the trekker makes no contribution to the economy because he doesn't employ anyone or buy food, hence there will be resentment with the villagers. There is little interaction with the locals as by the time all the camp chores are completed you have little time left to entertain the villagers.

Most who try this method end up by hiring a porter and living off the land. There is little to gain by carrying it yourself, but much to lose in that you may not see what Nepal really is like.

To summarize the above methods, for the first time trekker it is best to use a reliable company from your own country. For the trekker with some experience or the person who is confident of his own arrangements then there is much to be gained from the 'live off the land' approach. Carrying all your own gear is not advised.

How to Get There. From Australia most people fly to Kathmandu by either Thai International, Air India or Royal Nepal Airlines. These all operate regular services and travel agents can advise on fares and timetables. It is also possible to enter Nepal by land from India; this is common with those who are travelling the Overland Route to Europe. It is very difficult to enter Nepal from Tibet (which is to the north) as this is now part of China.

What You Will Need Before Leaving. Visas are required for Nepal. It is possible to enter by air, obtain a one-week visa and then get this extended to the standard one month, but as there are numerous public holidays and all paperwork is slow, the start of your trek could be delayed for up to a week. You can obtain a one-month visa in advance and your travel agent can handle this. At present the charge is \$US10.50 (about \$11) for the first month. In Nepal you can get your visa extended, for up to three months at a charge of \$US8.50 per week for the second month and \$US17 per week for the third month.

A young Ladakhi shepherd in traditional dress. Right, this ancient Ladakhi and his granddaughter are sunning themselves on their roof in the Markha valley, Ladakh. Campbell



Ladakh:

A Plea for its Future

● EVER SINCE IT WAS OPENED TO TOURISM IN 1974, Ladakh has held an especially strong attraction for trekkers. The incredible beauty of the vast, dry, trans-Himalayan landscape, thinly populated with small villages perched on cliffs or nestled in narrow gorges, combines the wonders of a lonely 'untouched' wilderness with the novelty of an 'unchanged' civilization.

The very nature of the semi-desert where the annual precipitation rarely exceeds ten centimetres, and the rigours of the climate, when temperatures in Leh can drop to -13 Centigrade in winter, ensured that the Ladakhi villager developed a relationship of considerable delicacy and balance with the land. Sturdy adobe houses supported by poplar rafters and willow wand roots blend with their dusty environment. A simple form of social forestry was developed ensuring the careful cultivation of trees wherever the land allowed. Life-giving water was channelled over long distances to irrigate fields of barley and buckwheat during the short summer season. All human and animal waste products were carefully recycled to enrich the soil and serve as cooking fuel. The absence of industrial waste products gave the land an undamaged natural appeal.

Not surprisingly, this traditionally oriented eco-system suddenly finds itself overwhelmed by change. Whether or not the changes in the cultural fabric of Ladakh are for the benefit or the detriment of the Ladakhi people, the physical effects of trekking upon the environment can not be overlooked. The very attractions which draw foreign tourists to this barren land are in danger of being debased through the carelessness and lack of environmental consciousness of the tourist trekkers and their local operators.

The most immediate and glaring examples of this debasement are found along the major trails and at campsites, in a profusion of litter and garbage. It is a sad reality that tourists representing highly advanced material cultures leave behind them, with apparently little guilt, a

trail of their industrial detritus. Chocolate wrappers blow along the dusty trail, sad imitations of dried rhubarb leaves and rose petals. Smashed bottles lie amidst the rocks. Tins, soup packets, cardboard boxes and chicken feathers dominate the surroundings at campsites. And of course the supreme insult to the environment is the ubiquitous crinkled toilet paper. An eyesore anywhere, toilet paper in Ladakh is the more nauseating because the extreme dryness of the atmosphere makes disintegration and decomposition a process of years. As anyone who is in the habit of burning their toilet paper knows, the second or two of mild olfactory discomfort is soon rewarded with the sight of a tiny pile of ashes busy disappearing in the wind. There is no excuse for individuals not to burn their paper and groups should be equipped to bury their excreta and add some dissolving agent like bleaching powder to speed up decomposition.

It is unfortunately true that while many local trek operators claim to take appropriate steps to contain rubbish and litter, few members of the operating group are ever on hand to see if the campsite is left cleaner than it was found. As often as not, campsites are actually on private property, whether on a harvested field, orchard green or grazing area, where the leaving of litter is not only damaging and obnoxious; it sets a precedence for the disposal of refuse locally as more articles of paper, tin and plastic find their way to remote village homes.

Good intentions do not make up for bad practices. Even rubbish, like tins of half-finished tuna and boxes of spoiled noodles, which is given a cursory burial a few centimetres below the ground, is soon dug up by prowling village dogs. The only really satisfactory method of protection against the leaving of indestructible/non-biodegradable garbage is to carry it out with you. Certainly for larger groups this would seem essential — a tough kit bag gradually filling up with crushed tins and styrofoam will add very little weight and can easily be loaded on to pack ponies as their burdens of perishable goods become lighter.

Inter-connected with the disposal of waste material is respect for water sources. It is too easy to say that since there is no major industrial pollution in the streams of Ladakh, a little bit of chemical soap or shampoo will hardly make a difference. Water channels and irrigation canals, often several kilometres in length, may serve as the only source of water for villages high up on a mountain side. Imagine the unhealthy effects upon a villager used to drinking this perfectly clean water, when a large group chooses to bathe, defecate, wash dishes or clean their chickens in it just upstream from his village. Water should always be taken out of these channels, or away from subterranean sources, and used where it will not do any damage.

Hand in hand with the visual degradation of the landscape are more subtle ecological problems brought on when the numbers of trekkers visiting a given area reach a certain volume. First among these is the over-use of limited campsites. Because patches of greenery and, on some routes, even flat land to pitch tents on are relatively few and far between, certain areas become obvious campsites, used again and again by trekkers. Not surprisingly, these sites often correspond with village locations and are often on marginal village grazing land. Continuous use by people with tents inhibits the customary growth of grass, and the addition of pack ponies in large numbers poses a considerable competitive threat to local livestock — both for grazing fodder and fuel burned by the horsemen. In many parts of the world over-use of certain trails has also contributed towards erosion.

Unlike in Switzerland or even in parts of Nepal where lodges, inns and tea-houses catering to the tourists' basic wants are located in practically every village or camping site, most of Ladakh still operates on a subsistence economy. Based mainly on self-sufficiency and a marginal amount of trading to stock up stores for the winter season, the economy of the average village can be seriously affected by trekkers who do not bring their own food and fuel. Under the drastic misunderstanding that anything can be had for money, the 'live-off-the-land' school of trekkers also increase the competition for fuel. Frequently obliged to cook on dung and marginal wood, such trekkers make serious incursions on the already meagre supplies of villagers. Add to this the fact that on certain routes there are no villages for days on end and it will be seen that the practice of travelling extra light and living off the land is not only impractical in Ladakh but can be positively damaging.

The invariable clashes of differing cultural concepts which occur between trekkers, operators and locals complete the picture. Most saddening amongst the cultural *faux pas* is the degradation of religious monuments, in particular maney (prayer stone) walls and chortens. It is shocking to see, side by side with European signatures, the names of many Kashmiris and Ladakhis scrawled on rocks and even over prayer stones, and the almost total nudity of chortens. Surely a more respectful attitude towards these monuments should be encouraged, not only among foreign tourists but among the local operators as well.

Another glaring insensitivity in a land where both men and women cover themselves fully with adequate clothing is the tendency, on hot windless days, towards the almost total nudity on the part of many trekkers, behaviour that is in direct contrast to social mores — and certainly changes the landscape. Further problems arise from the indiscriminate distribution of 'bon bones' to local children, a practice that is fast turning the younger villagers into persistent naggers, urged on often enough by their parents.

If these problems are to be solved and the over-all position of trekking in Ladakh redeemed, the realities of the situation must be agreed upon and concrete efforts made towards immediate improvement. Surely the basic value of tourism cannot be denied, yet it so obviously depends upon the intrinsic natural beauty of the

landscape and the friendliness of the local inhabitants, that a definite infra-structure controlling the damaging effects upon this environment and people would seem to be an obvious priority. Camping sites filling up with toilet paper and garbage can not go on forever attracting campers. Trails lined with chocolate wrappers and smashed bottles will not hold their old fascination for trekkers. Nor, under the circumstances, can the relationship improve between disgruntled villagers and over-enthusiastic visitors.

Perhaps the first positive step would be the dissemination of information to tourist-trekkers and their local guides and operators, and to the local people on the trekking routes. This information could take the form of strict guidelines given to all trek operators, delineating the environmental responsibilities of camp staffs to carry in their own fuel, to dig deep toilet trenches and see that they are properly covered up, to burn all destructible rubbish and carry out their tins and thick plastics, to respect water sources and to advise their clients on matters of environmental and cultural etiquette. Operators will surely understand that it is in their best interests to maintain these standards.

Regular reports from group leaders could be required to keep a check on abuses by the trekkers or their operators. Information for the individual trekker is of equal importance. A useful guide book with tips on what to and what not to do, complete with a discussion of environmental and cultural observances, would go a long way to ensuring that a lone trekker does not get lost, or find himself without food or fuel in inhospitable terrain, or become a burden on a friendly Ladakhi family seeking to help.

Perhaps signboards in Leh and at major roadheads would be constructive, urging trekkers to 'Keep Ladakh Clean', 'Carry Your Own Fuel' and 'Burn All Your Rubbish'. Certainly the individual trekker should be discouraged from trying to 'live off the land' and encouraged to keep it clean. If it were possible to have a 'regional guide' service, by which a pony man fully aware of the need to preserve the source of their income, these people would be ideally suited to accompany the individual trekker. If the guide were to come from the area trekked in, then the benefits would return to the local itself.

Another way in which local villagers along the trek routes could benefit along with the environment would be through the establishment of fixed, or regular, campsites. By charging a fixed fee per tent the landowner might be able to do more than recover the loss of a valuable grazing site and he could be instructed to ensure that the site was kept clean. To a limited extent this is already taking place as farmers in many villages now charge trekkers who camp in their orchards or fallow fields. In the final analysis it is always up to the trekkers themselves and their local operators to ensure that every campsite is left looking cleaner than it was found.

There were some methods of controlling the numbers of trekkers visiting a given area at a given time, the pressure on certain heavily used routes such as the Markha Valley, Padam to Lamayuru or Manali, the Humpet-Panikhar-Suru Valley, could be eased considerably. Whether it requires a permit system such as the one employed in Nepal, or whether a better method of controlling entry at fixed points such as at Markha and Marling for the Markha Valley is instituted, some form of monitoring the area is urgently needed.

Naturally different areas may prove to have differing carrying capacities; certainly the alpine bounty of Kashmir's Kolahoi area could sustain larger numbers of trekkers than the Markha Valley set in Ladakh's more delicate atmosphere. But the problems of environmental abuse are not regional and trekkers are bound to have negative effects on Himalayan ecosystems throughout India unless guidelines are arrived at soon. ■

Jeffrey Campbell



They obviously don't want you to stay for long periods!

Also you will need a valid health certificate for cholera, and it is advisable to be immunized for tetanus, typhoid and hepatitis but these are not essential. A thorough medical examination is strongly advised (compulsory with trek companies) as Nepal is not the best country in which to have a serious illness because the hospitals are primitive. Your local doctor can do all this for you and supply any medications you may require.

Money. It is best to take all you will need with you. Traveller's cheques in one of the major currencies are easily converted at banks: US and Australian dollars and sterling are the most common. Also some cash notes in US dollars can be useful in emergencies.

The local currency is the rupee and at the time of writing one Australian dollar was worth 13 rupees, but this continually changes. When travelling outside Kathmandu and Pokhara there are no exchange facilities (you are in villages) and it is necessary to carry enough rupees for the entire trek. How much you should carry depends on the type of trek and will range from \$50 to \$500 per month. It is best to take more than for the mere necessities of life (bed and food) as there is a large range of handicraft goods on offer and few people can resist what we regard as incredible bargains. Also, being in an undeveloped country, not everything runs smoothly, and a cash reserve means you can live comfortably when planes and other arrangements become delayed.

Equipment. If you are going on an organized trek then normally a sleeping bag and down jacket are supplied as well as all party equipment. A list should be issued to you suggesting what personal clothing and medications you should take and equipment problems will be reduced by following the list carefully.

If organizing yourself, you will need all the above as well as bringing (or hiring) your own sleeping bag, and down

Trekker and Nepali girl. Right, Nepalese bridge. Photos Chapman and Mark Daddo

jacket if going to the higher altitudes. Exactly what is required varies with the season and the altitude which you wish to reach. Detailed lists are given in the references in the summary at the end of this article. Most bushwalkers would have a good idea of what is required.

Trekking Permits. To many this comes as a surprise, but the visa in your passport is only valid for the Kathmandu valley, Pokhara and the Chitwan National Park. All visitors travelling beyond these areas must get a permit from the Central Immigration Office and this will specify the places you may visit and the routes you may follow. Each permit application requires two (three if with a trekking company) passport photos plus a fee of 75 rupees (\$6) a week. If you are on an organized trek this will be arranged for you; otherwise you must queue up in Kathmandu. It is wise to allow several days for this as frequent public holidays and the inevitable red tape can quickly use the spare days. Also, if going on a trek of longer than 30 days you must get your visa extended before leaving Kathmandu.

Dangers of Trekking. Fortunately trekking is a relatively safe and healthy activity but there are certain problems that are not generally encountered at home on walking trips.

Altitude Sickness. This is a unique problem that affects most people above 4,000 metres to varying degrees. Generally it is characterized by headaches, nausea and lethargy. While the causes cannot be pinpointed it is accepted that going to high altitudes too quickly can cause severe symptoms which do kill people if ignored. If common sense is used and the person suffering descends to lower altitudes then you have little to fear from this problem. In planning your itinerary reduce the length of your walking day above 3,000 metres and restrict your daily altitude gain to 500 metres or less. Even at these moderate gains you can still become sick and, contrary to common belief, fit people are just as susceptible as other trekkers.

Health. Virtually all visitors to Nepal get minor stomach upsets due to change of diet and the lower standards of hygiene. While inconvenient, this is usually only temporary and within a few days the trekker is eating well again. A more serious and rarer problem is dysentery which comes from tainted food and drink. If you have only boiled drinks and eat well cooked food the risk is very low. Hepatitis is another disease you may catch but this can now be inoculated against. General medicines for sunburn, colds, cuts and grazes cover the common problems.

Theft. A few years ago theft was unheard of in Nepal. Now it is common, one of the obvious detrimental effects of contact with our own culture. Cameras, in particular, are highly prized, as are passports and money. When you con-



A Glimpse of Nepal

• I CAN HEAR LOUD SINGING. IT ECHOES THROUGH the flurries of snowflakes on this mountainside in Nepal that is vegetated by thickets of scrub oak and rhododendron.

It's early spring. The snowflakes are only playing, they melt as they touch the ground. Here and there a rhododendron bloom breaks the sombre tones of the foliage; in another few weeks these slopes will blaze with colour.

Round a bend in the trail the singer strides into view: an orange-robed Buddhist monk, hands working frenziedly at a string of prayer beads. 'Namaste!' (I salute the God in you!) he intones as he passes.

Ahead the steepness gives way to a shelf perched between valley and mountaintop and fallow fields partitioned by stone walls surround a village. The canyon gapes below, ridges studded with giant conifers climb above. Higher still, floating curtains of cloud part here and there to reveal pinnacles, buttresses, scree and snowfields.

The scene is as perfect as a painted backdrop, except that the slope which extends for a few hundred metres above the village has been logged over to resemble a picture of the Australian forest after clear-felling: a wasteland of stumps, erosion gullies and criss-crossing animal trails. This piece of devastation, however, was accomplished without the aid of chain saw or bulldozer.

I wander the streets of the village, muddy alleys overhung by houses of stone and elaborately-carved woodwork. Geraniums bloom in the window boxes. The inhabitants are used to taking advantage of the passing trade of European trekkers and a woman calls from her window: 'Hello mister! Rice eating, no? Stay-ing?'

Her house's interior is clean and spacious, affluently by Nepali standards. The shelves display an array of gleaming brassware. As a contemporary touch, pinups from China Reconstructs paper the walls. Plump, smiling faces of workers in factories and on construction sites advertise the good life to be had over the border only 30 mountainous kilometres away.

Lunch on dhal bhat, the health food of a nation, plain rice enlivened by a spicy lentil sauce. Leaving my rucksack with the 'landlady', I set out for an afternoon's exploration. I'd like to climb a Himalayan peak, but think I'd better start with a small one. I settle for the shaggy hilltop that crowns the ridge to the east of the village.

I find a trail heading in the right direction, climb through the wasteland and into the trees. Tiny purple flowers dot the grassy forest floor. Snow-drifts lie in shady nooks and crannies, relics of a late winter blizzard which passed through a few weeks ago. I reach a saddle and pause to admire a scene of storybook beauty. A log cabin occupies a meadow cropped to lawn by grazing cattle. My chosen summit towers above: snow lies deep beneath the pines on the shady north-facing slope to the opposite side of the saddle.

My trail leads me into dense cloud forest. Moss and ferns carpet the ground, streamers of lichen festoon the gnarled branches. I can only hope that the axeman will never make it this far up the mountain, but I can see the smoke of the woodcutters' fires spiralling up from the gully below.

I'm climbing steeply now, and feeling the altitude; my heart pounds in my ears. Approaching the tree line, the forest thins to clumps of dwarf fir and rhododendron. The snow grass between is bleached, only lately emerged from beneath the receding snows. No trigonometrical survey marker crowns this summit, but a chorten, one of those Buddhist monuments whose form symbolises the four elements and the oneness of creation. Ravens wheel overhead, prayer flags flutter in the chilly breeze.

Shivering, I survey the scene. This is the merest foothill, up ahead the real mountains begin. Cloud obscures all but the odd glimpse of precipitous slopes slashed by rubble-filled ravines, fall-out from the invisible peaks above. In the opposite direction, forested ridges tumble away into the Nepali midlands — range after range marching away to a hazy southern horizon, their labyrinthine spurs and gullies carved into intricate patchworks of terraced cultivation, tiny human marks on a vast landscape.

I descend through forest turning eerie in the gathering twilight. Below the saddle I lose the trail and find myself slithering and sliding on crumpling gully sides, wrestling a way through tall bamboo grass; I never thought I'd need to scrub bash in Nepal.

A full moon climbs from behind the mountain wall just in time to light my way down the final logged-over slope into the village. •

Trevor Lewis



MF 90

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Hallmark has always been proud of its ability to manufacture products which are a little different from the norm: products which give the end user maximum value and which push other manufacturers to strive that little bit harder to keep up. This time, however, Hallmark has really 'worked the oracle'. The MF90 has moved pack technology forward in one huge bound. This is by far the most comfortable pack I have ever used and the amazing thing is it can adjust to fit absolutely anybody perfectly. I'm sure that you'll be as happy with your MF90 as I am with mine.



Graeme
Dingle



Hallmark

Graeme Dingle

sider that an SLR camera has the astronomical value of one year's wages in Nepal, it is no wonder that they are stolen.

When To Go? Each season has its own beauty; views alter and village life styles change according to local requirements. The summer months of June to September are the least popular as this is the hot, rainy monsoon season. Views are rare but the fields are very green and the villagers busy tending the crops.

With the end of the monsoon it becomes cooler, rainfall is rare and it is very rewarding to trek any time from October to April. From October to December, views of the spectacular mountains are often crystal clear and the fields are still green from the monsoon rains. Over the cold dry season of winter (January and February) the views are excellent although the temperature can sometimes be very cold. Occasional winter storms may cause snowfalls and the peaks are even more beautiful with fresh snow after the clouds clear. March and April are the spring months when flowers come out in abundance, especially the rhododendrons, but due to haze the views are not usually as good as in other seasons. As a prelude to the monsoon, showers are more common.

Whatever the weather the wise trekker will be prepared for all conditions from snowfalls to sunburn as the weather, dominated by the huge mountains, can be as unpredictable as in any other mountainous area.

Trekking Areas. Nepal is only a small country but it is too large to walk over all of it. Several areas, due to the combination of scenery and interesting cultures, are of particular interest to trekkers. Most treks take from one to four weeks. There are some restricted areas, particularly near the borders and at the western end of the country, for which entry permits are not issued.

Khumbu Valley. This is the area made famous by the many expeditions that tackle Mt Everest, the highest peak in the world. The most popular trek here is to walk up the valleys to climb Mt Kali Pattar (an easy walk except for the altitude) near Everest Base Camp. The valley is populated by the famous Sherpa people who, with their tough weathered faces, form a sharp contrast to the people of the foothills and plains. The area consists of steep valleys with towering icy peaks far above.

To approach this area by walking, a two-week trek from either the Chinese border road near Kathmandu or the plains on the southern border with India is recommended. These approaches allow you to acclimatize to the altitude as you pass many different types of village life and cultures.

The other approach is to fly to Lukla, a tiny airstrip poised at the entrance to the Khumbu Valley. While this gives a



Machapuchare, the fish's tail, dominates this section of the trail to the Annapurna Sanctuary. Chapman

fast access to the valley there are more altitude problems as the airstrip is at 3,000 metres, and the interesting foothills are missed. However, for the trekker with limited time, the airstrip is handy. Due to the sometimes difficult mountain weather and problems of aircraft maintenance the planes don't fly every day, so expect delays and sometimes cancellation of flights for several days.

The average trekker spends about ten to 15 days in the Khumbu although you could easily stay longer.

Pokhara-Annapurna Region. Pokhara, the second largest city in Nepal, is a broad valley at the foot of the Annapurna Range. Behind the town there are a couple of ridges, then the peaks themselves, visible from the town. A short climb of several hours on to these ridges reveals one of the most spectacular panoramas of the Himalayas. Four of the highest peaks in the world form the skyline, with numerous others in between.

It is not surprising that this area is extremely popular. Here are available very

easy short treks of only four to eight days for the less fit. Slightly longer treks of about 14 days to the Annapurna Sanctuary and Jomson are popular, and for hardy trekkers the 24-day circuit right round the Annapurna Range through Manang has much to offer.

With easy access from Kathmandu of regular plane flights (well, nearly regular), and a good road on which buses travel daily, there is little problem in getting there, and this area will continue to increase in popularity. Also, it is well endowed with lodges and tea houses.

Langtang. This lesser known area is directly north of Kathmandu and is gaining popularity as its delights become known. Wide glacial valleys reveal excellent views and the major route passes through a variety of cultures and tribes in a few short days. Access is very easy, with a short bus ride from Kathmandu, and some trekkers begin walking from Kathmandu itself.

Some Reading. *Kathmandu and the Kingdom of Nepal* by Prakash A Raj
Trekking in the Himalayas by Stan Armstrong
Trekking in Nepal by Stephen Bezruczka ●

HARVEY

The Amateur Canoe Association of Western Australia hosted the 1983 Australian Wildwater and Slalom Championships (14-16 January) near Harvey, in the foothills of the Darling Range, 140 kilometres south of Perth. Stirling Dam gates were opened and adjusted daily, to create a boiling grade three torrent. Competitors from drought stricken eastern states seemed seriously handicapped.

Twenty-two-year-old European and World Champion, Englishman Richard Fox (pictured), performed with enviable style to dominate both the International Invitation and Australian Championship kayak (K1) slalom events. Only raging, treacherous white water separated spectator and competitor. All photos Reg Hatch.



W 1 9 8 3







Tim Doyle (bottom left) from New South Wales convincingly won the Australian kayak (K1) wildwater championship from Ian Gardner (NSW) and Western Australian Ian Vincent who Doyle followed home in the international wildwater event. Dark horse John Christenson (NSW) placed well in his pet event, the canoe (C1) slalom, and became Australian Champion by being first Australian in the kayak (K1) slalom championship in which Lindsay Binning and Ian Vincent were second and third. Vivienne Golding won the ladies kayak (K1) wildwater championship from Jenny Downs and Mandy Linden (pictured bottom middle) and was first Australian in the ladies kayak (K1) slalom. Only dedication and hard work stands between our talented juniors and success in the World Championships. Paul Beattie won the under 18 kayak (K1) slalom from Rod Arnott and Derek Sheppard, who defeated Craig Falconer (pictured below) to win the kayak (K1) wildwater event.





A Long Day: Mt Bogo



Victoria's classic ski tour, Mt Bogong to Mt Hotham in a day; by Fritz Balkau.

● A LOUD, INSISTENT BUZZING noise cut through my sleep with all the delicacy of a chain saw. Bloody alarm clocks! It was dark outside, and very cold. Sleeping bag suction has tremendous power at 4.30 am half way up Mt Bogong.

Forced emergence, and a very rapid putting on of not very warm clothes which had been the only padding on the hard cement floor. Surprising how long it takes to get ready, have a lonely breakfast, get the minor items of gear packed in the day pack, and wax the skis. Almost 40 minutes. It would be light soon. Must get moving.

I had succumbed to one of the more colourful challenges of the Victorian Alps. Bogong to Hotham. In a day. Solo. Last week I had a companion for the trip. A mate who was fitter than I, but who had been unable to drive himself past the half-way point. He'd had an 'off' week-end and now I was determined to complete it by myself.

The reminder of that earlier week-end was to accompany the next 12 hours like a bad dream. The snow had been superb then, now it was ice. I'd had my favourite skis then; this time a pair of extra-long racing skis, inappropriate for the hard surface. The weather had been cool and overcast, now it was to be a scorching, cloudless day. And of course the isolation now; no risky manoeuvres, no chances.

Starting from Bivouac Hut gave an

*Alone on Mt Nelse, Bogong High Plains.
Chris Baxter*

ng to Mt Hotham

HIGH (COUNTRY) TECHNOLOGY

The answer to high lift prices & crowded slopes



Brand new technology from Kastle, Tyrolia, Dynafit, Gipron and Montono now provides the ideal solution for the combination of downhill skiing and high mountain touring.

TYROLIA TRB Weighing only 760g each, the new super lightweight binding offers all the options in a combination downhill/touring format.



In its touring mode, the TRB pivots freely at the toe. When locked for downhill it offers the full safety of lateral release plus excellent performance in boot re-centering.

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KASTLE TOUR RANDONEE At 2.5kg/pr this super lightweight ski is the ideal combination ski designed specifically for high mountain touring and virgin snow downhill skiing.

DYNAFIT TOUR EXTREME A multipurpose downhill, touring, mountaineering boot. The vibrom sole, ankle hinge pivot and special heel lock release allow for easy walking. The lace up, wool lined, inner boot is removable and converts to apres ski boot. All this is combined in a top performance, comfortable ski boot.



GIPRON SHERPA SKI POLE This is a telescopic type pole, infinitely variable in length between 100cm and 150cm for easy use on all occasions.

MONTANA CLIMBING SKINS These self adhesive removable mahair skins are easily attached to the ski base to permit climbing straight up the steepest slopes.

hour's start by putting the long climb up the Staircase Spur behind. (The purists start at Mountain Creek.) The snow above the hut was crisp and hard. Occasional skiing, mostly walking and easy climbing either way. A tinge of light to the east gave promise of sunrise. It was a joy to be alive, the challenge of the day still ahead.

The first anxious moments came all too soon: firm ice on the side of Castor and Pollux. One slip here and that would be it. The very cautious, step by step traverse, kicking steps which cut into the leather of the new boots, took almost 30 minutes and huge amounts of adrenalin. At this rate I wouldn't get anywhere. On the steep climb to the summit ridge the wax wouldn't grip. Should I waste time in re waxing? By now the sun had risen, and I was an hour behind schedule. But it was a fantastic view and the camera, whose weight I would later regret, recorded the early morning scene for posterity.

There was no time to waste. A fast time for the trip is ten hours and I was behind schedule already. The hard ice on the top made the going slow, because it was too 'fast': ruts and bumps upset my balance, descents were frightening. By the time I had passed Cleve Cole Hut, I was tired of edging, side-slipping and skidding. Down the creek, narrowly missing a couple of large holes in the creek and then down T Spur. Ice again, this time in thick bush. The soft fluffy snow of last week was only a memory. Hard, difficult and careful going down the spur — and slow, to avoid a fall. Couldn't afford a bad fall here. And must take care to descend the correct spur.

Fantastically beautiful scenery flitted by almost (but not quite) unnoticed.

I had succumbed to one of the more colourful challenges of the Victorian Alps.

There was deep snow among the big trees, bird noises and frozen animal tracks.

The last stretch down to the river was a brisk walk in the sun. The icy cold water of the Big River restored perspective and was a reminder of what this was all about. Frozen toes were what it was all about then.

The walk up Duane Spur brought back circulation. Eventually the snow line reappeared and the skis carried me instead of the other way round. But, yes, it does indeed go on, and on, and up, doesn't it? The energy content of the food bar and chocolate eaten down by the river had to be supplemented by

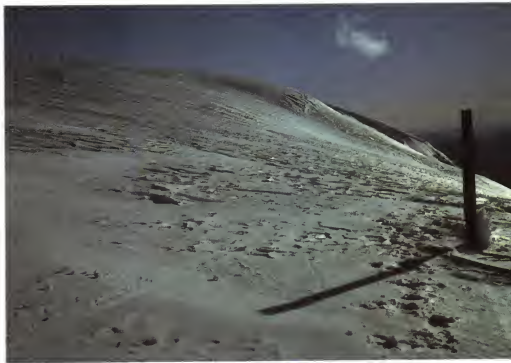
more of the same. Almost 600 metres of unremitting up, and it was a warm day. Litres of perspiration were shed to ease the load.

Gradually, eventually, it flattens out, but this only served to permit a faster pace. Beyond Ropers Hut (never sighted) and the tree line (soon passed), the long, flat ridge to Mt Nelse appeared, endless and icy.

There was no chance of a drink despite the heat. The plastic water bottle had shattered some time ago during a fall on the ice. There was a group of skiers a little way ahead, but no, they

real morale booster to put this spot, the limit of last week's test, behind.

Thirty-five minutes later, having discovered a long-lost friend at the self-same spot, I set off again, feeling more tired than when I arrived. The snow was now soft and wet, the weather unmercifully close. One could be tempted to try to swim across the aqueduct rather than find one of the rare snow bridges. Up Basalt Hill then along the pole line to Cope Saddle. Delightful country, but by now my sights were set on the distant goal of Mt Hotham, still a very long way off. Wax not gripping well, and I was fed



Mt Bogong's frozen summit. Erik Westrup

were dry also. Irresponsible of them really, to travel without water.

The descent from Mt Nelse drove all thoughts of drink from my mind. An infinite descent of pure ice, interrupted only by the frozen tracks of yesterday's skiers. A feeling of disappointment more than despair now. Such a magnificent slope; wasted. By the time I'd side-slipped down it, my feet were protesting quite loudly. Bad luck, fellas — only another seven hours to go.

The track down Watchdog Creek was one of the few enjoyable stretches of snow that day: a pair of fast icy grooves, at a modest gradient — just stand there and the skis do the turning. There was a fleeting moment of panic when, after flying round a corner, a group of skiers appeared, also using the same grooves. They leapt from the track with startled expressions on their faces. A few minutes later Rocky Valley Storage came into view and foreshadowed an almost forgotten promise of a ten-minute lunch break. So far so good. I had taken six hours and was behind schedule, but not tired. It would be at

up with the long narrow skis. Curse these end-of-season bargains.

I was very hot and thirsty now. It was not only the ancient mariner for whom there was 'water water everywhere, nor any drop to drink'. The creeks were enticingly close, but infuriatingly hard to reach. A long cold drink became an obsession, and the earlier brisk pace slowed somewhat. The pack for the first time became noticeable: was the sleeping bag, bivvy bag, first aid kit etc etc really all that necessary? They seemed to be essential 18 hours ago.

The State Electricity Commission Hut at last — I thought it would never come. A chance to rest for five minutes (20 in fact), another few calories to drive the muscles, and snow on a hot tin roof melted quickly enough to give a trickle of water. Then it was time to go, after leaving another of these little notes for Barry in case he had to look for me the next day. 'FB — 2.30 pm — going well.' Reasonably well, anyway. With less than four hours to go, I should get there just before dark.

Off again, along the pole line, then cut across the head of the aqueduct. Water at last! Accessible! Another five

The Salomon SR 40 & 45 Touring: A new idea in Cross-Country Skiing.

After great success with the SR90 racing system in the 1980 Euroloppet and 1981 World Loppet events, Salomon introduces the SR40 and SR45 touring boot and binding system.

A central ridge in the binding mates with a compatible groove in the sole of the boot. This gives precise control for technical turns, downhill and herringbone steps.

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the binding to allow a higher heel lift. The increased freedom allows a longer stride and a more powerful kick.

Now Nordic skiers have the convenience of a vertical entry step-in binding, simple and quick.

An integrated boot/binding system that delivers precise control and a longer stride.



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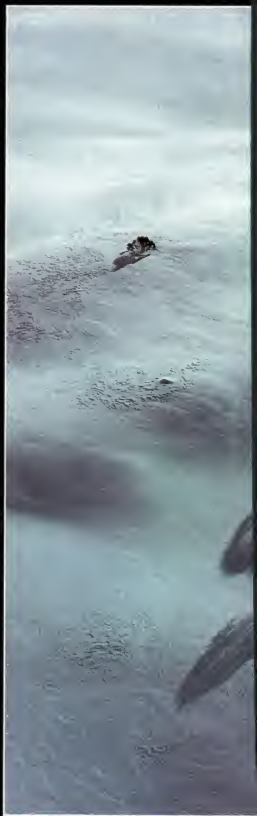
Bill Bachman

Little Buller, and opposite, on Mt Hotham. Both peaks are in the Victorian Alps.





*Above, on
Mt Buller,
Victoria,
and right,
on the
Main Range,
New South
Wales.*





GORE-TEX® DOWN UNDER

GORE-TEX® A Brief History

GORE-TEX® Fabric was introduced in the northern hemisphere in 1976 through qualified manufacturers of garments, tents and sleeping bags. Developed through advanced technology, GORE-TEX® Fabric is still the most breathable, completely water-proof and wind-proof fabric in existence.

By late 1978, through the combined efforts of manufacturers and consumers plus extensive research and development, GORE-TEX® Fabric was modified substantially to become an "easy care" product. Care and washing instructions were simplified dramatically.

1980 saw a further advance with a breakthrough in seam sealing technology. The GORE Seam Sealing Machine allows seams to be permanently and effectively sealed at the time the product is manufactured.

Progress has continued and new laminating techniques now permit GORE-TEX® Fabric to be used in a variety of new applications including running shoes, hiking boots, fashion footwear, X-C ski boots and ski gloves.

GORE-TEX® Fabric is simply the most functional fabric on the market at this time for all-weather protection and comfort.

GORE-TEX® Fabric Arrives "Down Under."

In 1979 Mountain Designs and Paddymade, two of the leading manufacturers of outdoor gear in Australia, made their first garments from "easy care" GORE-TEX® Fabric. These parkas and overtrousers have been tried and proven in all weather conditions in Australia, New Zealand and overseas.

In 1980 Macpac Products of Christchurch introduced GORE-TEX® Fabric into the New Zealand market with the "Light Year" lightweight tunnel tent. This was soon followed with clothing accessories in

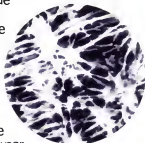
GORE-TEX® Fabrics by Alp Sports and Wilderness Products.

Many other progressive manufacturers of quality gear and garments for outdoor pursuits now incorporate GORE-TEX® Fabric in their ranges as the premium performance product.

Some of these Australian and New Zealand products made in GORE-TEX® Fabrics are illustrated and reader enquiries directed to the manufacturers will be welcomed and given prompt attention.

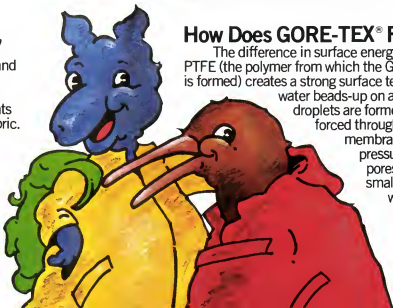
What is GORE-TEX® Fabric?

It is a combination of the unique GORE-TEX® membrane and woven and knit outerwear fabrics. While the shell and liner fabrics provide strength and durability, the key to performance is the GORE-TEX® membrane which is microporous, yet hydrophobic (water-proof). The result of this combination is water-proof, wind-proof, and durable garments which are comfortable to wear because moisture inside is allowed to evaporate and escape.



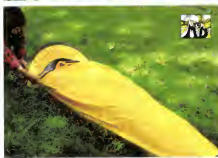
How Does GORE-TEX® Fabric Work?

The difference in surface energy between water and PTFE (the polymer from which the GORE-TEX® membrane is formed) creates a strong surface tension, and much like water beads-up on a freshly waxed car, water droplets are formed which can only be forced through the GORE-TEX® membrane at very high pressures. This is because its pores are many times smaller than the individual water droplets. The result is water-proofness equal to or better than most coated fabrics.





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PELLINI



J.P. SPORTS



GORE-TEX



Gore-Tex®

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Trade enquiries: WL Gore & Associates (Australia) Pty Ltd PO Box 99 Frenchs Forest NSW 2086 Telex 73355 Answerback code 0ZGORE Telephone (02) 977 7355

TM Gore-Tex is a trademark of WL Gore and Associates

Dynamic ropes

Beal France

Diameter	Breaking strength	Elongation at failure	UAA elongation in use	UAA falls	Weight	Available length	Water repellent treatment	RR price	UAA
Single 11 mm	2,450 kgf	68%	5.5%	9	79 g/m	50 m	Optional	\$86	Good value single rope
Double 9	1,650	68	7.5	11	51	50	Optional	\$65	Well priced double rope, also available as 90 m bicolor
Single 10.5	2,200	70	6	5	68	50	Optional	\$82	Light, hard-wearing single rope
Double 8.8	1,450	70	7.5	7	48	50	Optional	\$63	Popular, light, good handling

Blueswater USA

Single 11	na	na	4	6-7	78.5	50	Optional	\$130	New, good handling
Double 9	na	na	6.6	5	50.5	50	Optional	\$114	New, good handling
Single 11.5	2,550	65	7.4	12-15	84	50	Yes	na	Very high fall rating
Single 11	2,250	64	7.6	8-10	69.5	50	Yes	\$140	Very expensive, lightweight, good feel and handling
Dynaloc MD-76	1,980	52	7.4	19-20	61	50	Yes	\$145	Exceptionally high fall rating
Dynaloc GD-61	2,550	58	7.2	10-12	85	50	Optional	na	
Classic S-85	2,350	54	7.6	6-7	72	50	Optional	\$138	Popular rope with excellent handling
Classic M-72	1,750	60	7.3	9-14	53	50	Optional	\$119	Popular, hard-wearing and good handling rope
Classic L53	2,450	45	7.3	9-12	85	50	Optional	na	
Basic S-85	2,050	45	6.9	6	70	50	Optional	\$126	Light single rope
Single 11	2,050	57	7.7	5-9	52	50	Optional	na	
Basic L-52	1,550	57	7.7	5-9	52	50	Optional	na	
Double 8.5	1,250	52	8.5	3-5	45	100	Yes	\$208	Very light specialist alpine rope, tightly woven mantle. Not UAA approved

Elite Germany

Everyday M-30	2,410	44	5*	9	80	50	Yes	\$122	Good handling rope with a high fall rating
Extreme S-20	2,450	48	3.2*	7	73	50	Yes	\$124	Lightweight single alpine rope
Superflex	2,400	42	2.7*	12	84	50	Yes	\$132	Extremely flexible, very hard-wearing and heavy. Suitable for aid
Supertex 2,000	2,880	48	5.5*	12	83	50	Yes	\$142	Hard-wearing abrasion resistant rope
Everyday 9 mm	1,990	42	2.9*	6	52	50	Yes	\$83	Light with tightly woven mantle

Mammut Switzerland

Single 11.7	na	na	5.5	18	86	50	No	\$155	Very heavy, exceptional fall rating
XCR-8	na	na	5	8-9	74	45	Optional	\$120	Good, general purpose rope
Xite Flex	na	na	5.1	9-11	78	50	No	\$132	
Xite Flex	na	na	5.1	5-6	66.5	45	Optional	\$115	Light, single rope
Double 9	na	na	4.5	5	49	45	Optional	\$90	Very light double rope

Static ropes

Beal France

Diameter	10.5 mm	2,020W6552,020 kgf	na	4%
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Dynastat USA

Blueswater II	9	1,820/1,820/—	20.8%	1.8
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Blueswater II

Blueswater II	10	2,600/2,600/—	20.8	1.8
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Blueswater II

Blueswater II	11	3,160/3,160/—	20.8	1.8
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Blueswater II

Blueswater II	13	3,269/3,269/—	20.8	1.8
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Edelrid Germany

Superstatic	9	2,165/na	35	4
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Superstatic

Superstatic	10	2,640/na	29	2.5
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Superstatic	11	3,150/na	30	2.5
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Handing and ease of making knots	Weight drywet	Price range
na	70na g/m	\$140-\$185m Innovative design, low stretch, requires careful rigging because of its elasticity
na	52/59	Light, low stretch, hard-wearing double rope for canyoning and through trees underground
na	70/80	European diameter, Blueswater features
na	78/89	Long-lasting, good value
na	82/95	Specifically designed for rescue applications. Large diameter, excellent handling, lower abrasion resistance
na	52/na	High strength, ideal double rope for canyoning and through trees underground
na	60/na	European diameter, Edelrid features
na	75/na	Stiff but good value

Breaking strength is given in kgf; kilograms force or kiloponds. One kilopond equals 9.8 Newtons. **UAA elongation in use** figures were obtained with an 80 kg weight used to produce the static rope and the Elite dynamic rope elongation in use figures. The UAA drop test measures the performance of one single rope or two ball (double) ropes. All dynamic ropes surveyed are UAA tested and approved except the Edelrid Twin-XLD Dyne. Prices are subject to the effect of the recent Australian currency devaluation. Obsolete assessment, the more used the better. The static ropes surveyed have a nylon (polyamide) core and mantle except the Beal Dynastat with a terylene (polyester) core and two nylon sheaths. Static rope is generally available off the spool in lengths of 40 to 200 m. Static rope is not presently available with a heat-treated treatment. na not available.

● **DYNAMIC AND STATIC ROPES ARE DESIGNED** for specific applications. The most commonly accepted distinction between a dynamic and static rope is that of stretch, their elongation in use and elongation at failure. A dynamic rope stretches more than a static rope.

Only ropes of keratan construction are appropriate for use in the applications discussed below. Keratan rope has a central core (term) and one or more sheaths (term) mantle. The core provides the core of the strength, and the static rope has the mantle designed to absorb a shock load after failure of the core.

Dynamics rope has a dynamic nature. That is, it stretches under a load. By stretching under a sudden heavy load, a dynamic rope will absorb the shock that would otherwise be transferred directly to a falling climber. The low elasticity of a static rope would impose a dangerous high impact force on a falling climber at the termination of a severe fall. On the other hand, a rope with too much stretch will increase the jolting edges of the fall and risk of injury caused by hitting ledges or the ground. Dynamic ropes for rockclimbers and mountaineers are designed as a compromise between these two extremes.

It is not difficult to distinguish a satisfactory dynamic rope. The International Organization of Alpine Clubs (UIAA) has standardized the testing of dynamic ropes. Dynamic ropes that meet the UIAA's stringent and comprehensive standards carry a prominent label.

The UIAA drop test determines a rope's dynamic strength. A set weight is dropped free for five metres and held by a two-and-a-half metre length of rope. The rope at its middle point passes over a five millimetre radius. An 80 kilogram weight is used for single ropes, and a 55 kilogram weight for half ropes (ropes designed for use in pairs). A rope sample must hold a minimum of five consecutive falls at five-minute intervals to meet UIAA standards. Impact force is the sudden stress transmitted to the climber, rope, karabiner and anchor during a fall. Part of this energy is dissipated by rope elongation; the remaining stress during the first drop test must not exceed approximately 1,200 kilograms for a single rope and 800 kilograms for a half rope.

While some elongation under drop stress is desirable, a dynamic rope should stretch as little as possible during normal use. The UIAA elongation in use standard allows stretching under a constant load of 80 kilograms to a maximum of 6% for single ropes and 8% for half ropes. (A 100 kilogram weight has been used to obtain the Elite 'elongation in use' figures.)

An indication of handling quality is given by the ease of making knots. The largest free space within a loaded overhand knot must be smaller than the rope diameter.

All of the dynamic ropes reviewed in this issue are UIAA approved, except the Edelrid and the Edelrid XLD Drilling. The UIAA effectively takes care of the more important aspects of rope selection but other attributes must also be considered.

Perimeter is an important consideration. A dynamic rope is classed as a single or half rope. A single rope is suitable for most rockclimbing situations. Rope drag while rockclimbing often be reduced by using a pair of half ropes. Half ropes are also valuable in serious alpine and rockclimbing situations where longer abseils may have to be undertaken and there may be a greater risk of ropes being cut by rockfall or sharp edges.

Many ropes are available with (an optional) waterproof treatment to improve handling in wet and dry conditions that can effectively turn uncoiled rope into steel cable.

The choice of colour is purely personal; all manufacturers have an extensive range from which to choose.

Although 45 metre ropes have been popular in the past, the standard length of rope used by Australian climbers is 50 metres.

Beal climbing ropes from France are available in a number of diameters for single and double rope technique. They offer an additional pair of lightweight ropes for the weight conscious climber. These are the 10 mm single rope and the 8.8 mm half rope. The 8.8 mm half rope has become a firm favourite amongst serious climbers. It is light and has good handling, hard wearing reputation. In the past, both the 9 mm and 11 mm ropes have suffered from poor resistance to wear. Beal has lightened up the mantle weave on these ropes and as a result they should become very popular. Beal ropes are excellent value for money and readily available.

Blowwater are well known for their range of static ropes. However, they recently introduced two dynamic ropes of 9 mm and 11 mm diameter. Apparently, top mountaineer Jeff Lowe helped with the development of these ropes over a four-year period. As yet, little is known about the quality of the rope, although they have a nice feel and handle well, particularly the 9 mm size. Four colours are available.

Edelrid, a West German manufacturer, have for many years offered a range of excellent ropes that have become a standard by which other ropes are judged. With excellent handling and

long wearing, lightly woven mantles, Edelrid ropes are undoubtedly well-constructed. Obviously you pay more for such a performance rope.

Elife have had a good name in ropes for some time. The table surveys five models, four are single ropes. Elite ropes are widely available in the UK but availability in Australia is limited. They handle and wear reasonably well, with the 11 mm Superflex model being particularly good. Perhaps this survey will create greater interest in what appears to be a very good range of ropes.

Based in Switzerland, Mammut have a range of all work ropes. The type range is 11 to 18 mm and is not available. As a general purpose rope they perform well. They do tend to be a stiffer handling rope, but that does not hinder more general climbing. As with Beal, the mantle construction has been improved which should increase their durability. Mammut ropes are not widely available but are well represented in a few specialist shops.

Static ropes are used for abseiling, single rope technique (SRT) vertical caving, canyoning and rescue operations. When either descending or ascending, the user's full body weight is on the rope for extended periods (unlike the intended use of a dynamic climbing rope). A static rope should not stretch significantly in normal use. While it should not be shock loaded, a static rope must have adequate strength for occasions when it is accidentally shock loaded. Blowwater ropes have been designed to absorb a shock load without failure, but the fall may be stopped rather suddenly. The Beal Dynastat is designed to absorb a shock load by failure of the core if the shock load is above a certain level; the load is then transferred to the polyamide (nylon) sheaths. Edelrid do not appear to mention the energy absorption properties of their ropes.

Unfortunately there is no internationally accepted standard for static rope, although the British Cave Research Association (BCRA), in conjunction with the British Standards Association, is in the process of developing a draft standard.

A static rope should be of keratan construction, designed for descending and ascending, and made of either polyamide (nylon) or polyester (terylene). Ropes made from polypropylene should not be used because their breaking strength and melting points are inadequate. Some ropes, particularly those made of polyester (terylene), lose up to 40% of their strength through ageing.

The diameter, core and mantle breaking strength and abrasion resistance are critical.

Abrasion is the greatest single threat to a static rope. A light well constructed sheath and a strong core will contribute to high abrasion resistance. Ropes used singly should be at least 10 mm in diameter to give an adequate margin of safety. If designed appropriately, 9 mm ropes are acceptable for use as double ropes.

A rope which is used for ascending and descending should have little stretch to minimize abrasion and fatigue when ascending. Some 'static' ropes on the market in Australia have stretch in excess of twice that listed by the manufacturer. Because of the relatively high stretch of those ropes they are unsuitable for rescue applications.

Static ropes are commonly misunderstood; talk to an informed supplier before buying your rope.

Caring for your rope. A rope is the climber's, caver's and canyoneer's single most important piece of equipment. Improper use or care of your rope could result in serious injury.

Always try to keep your rope clean. If dirty, wash it by hand in lukewarm water and a mild detergent (don't use anything containing chlorine). Keep the rope well away from corrosive chemicals. Particular care should be taken when placing it in the boot of a car. Avoid standing on your rope and inspect it regularly for possible damage.

All textile fibres are affected by ultra violet light. However, keratan ropes are not at great risk as the core is protected from sunlight by the mantle. Store and transport ropes away from direct heat and sunlight.

It is very difficult to tell when the useful life of a rope is at an end. It depends on many factors. A rope should be discarded after serious damage to the mantle or an extreme fall. A white core and coloured mantle allows immediate identification of mantle damage.

Use appropriate descending and belaying devices and rope protection when necessary. Remember that even appropriate knots and well-rounded edges dramatically reduce a rope's strength.

Old age is the usual end to a well cared-for rope. As soon as you feel uncomfortable with your rope, buy a new one. ●

Mark Buchanan and Glenn Tempest. Thanks to Philip Toomer and Loch Wilson.



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Track Notes

Western Australia's Lonely South Coast

A coastal walk worth crossing the continent for; by Ian Maley.



• CAPE LEEUWIN, 300 KILOMETRES SOUTH OF Perth, dramatically marks a change of direction in the Australian coastline. Tucked in behind the cape at the mouth of the Blackwood River, the small township of Augusta looks out across Flinders Bay and a long, lonely, exposed coastline. This seaboard faces the full fury of the Southern Ocean. In the 200 kilometres from the Leeuwin to Peaceful Bay there is only one small coastal settlement, Windy Harbour, beneath the limestone cliffs of Point D'Entrecasteaux. The sealed road approaching it suggests more than the handful of fair weather holiday and fishing shacks that exist there. Alternative access to this coast is by way of sand tracks which require off-road vehicles, or by canoe or boat to the mouth of the Donnelly River or Broke Inlet.

The land adjacent to the coast is variously public land, grazing lease, proposed National Park and National Park. The National Parks are, or will be, called Walpole-Nornalup, D'Entrecasteaux and South Coast. Behind the dunes, lowlands and cliffs, the coastal swamps, lakes, heath and woodlands merge into medium and tall forest. At the southern end of this coastline the karri forest is within a few kilometres of the ocean. Detours into this unique

and magnificent forest lead the walker through an interesting variety of habitats.

Much of the attraction of walking the south coast lies in its isolation. The South Western Highway is well inland. At most, the walker can expect to meet an occasional fishing party at two or three popular spots during holiday periods. Looking out from the cliffs on the seaward side of Broke Inlet, a walker can imagine the uneasiness of the early Dutch and French navigators as they beat their way along the coast.

Information. There are two 1:50,000 topographic map series covering the area. The first, compiled by the 5th Field Survey Corps and available through the Central Map Agency in Perth, has few advantages over the second, the new WA Forests Department metric series. The army maps depict vegetation quite well but do not show land tenure. The route falls on the Gardner River, Walbup and Sadleir Island army sheets, with Deep River also required for access information. The Broke Inlet and Walpole Forests Department large format maps cover these and more! Neither series shows all the existing tracks leading to the coast.

Information on the Walpole-Nornalup National

Heading south towards Clifty Head and Chatham Island, Maley

Park is available from the WA National Parks Authority, Hackett Drive, Nedlands, 6009, or from the Ranger at Walpole.

Getting there. Access is from the South Western Highway (National Route No 1) and although bus services use this road there is no public transport branching off it. Windy Harbour is reached via Northcliffe, the last source of fuel and stores. Without returning through Northcliffe and across to the highway, Chesapeake and Broke Inlet Roads can be followed back to the highway near Walpole. Tinglewood and Isle Roads run from the highway to the two alternative lower ends of the walk. Fuel and stores are available in Walpole.

The mid-point of the walk is the mouth of Broke Inlet. Trips have been done using canoes (and getting lifts on the occasional fishing boats) to reach the inlet mouth some 8½ kilometres over water from the road head. The nearest seaward shore of the inlet is 2 kilometres over open water and while mainly shallow, a dangerous chop can blow up over the long fetches on this inlet. A water drop at the in-

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let mouth would avoid having to take on extra drinking water for the West Cliff Point to Clifty Head stage of the walk.

The walk is described in terms of heading south. There are two non-compelling reasons for doing it this way: the worst weather will usually come over the right shoulder or from behind, and facilities are much closer at the Waipole end when the walk is finished.

When to go. Autumn and spring have the least severe weather conditions. Summers are usually hot, but the excellent swimming opportunities can compensate. The south-west corner of the State does receive considerable summer rainfall. In winter the Southern Ocean is invariably rough and the shoreline can be very spectacular. Where cliffs are passed at sea level, high routes may need to be chosen (Mandaly Beach to Long Point and Hush Hush Beach to Point Nuyts). The mouth of the Gardner River and the mouth of Broke Inlet must both be crossed. The Gardner has a granite bar where its small estuary narrows for the passage into the ocean. Mid-winter flows could cause difficulties. Broke Inlet has a deep sand bar. In particularly wet years it breaks, and this huge inlet may lose over two metres of water in one spectacular event. On this rare occasion crossing would be out of the question.

Campsites and water. Although not peculiar to this State, water is a major concern for walkers in Western Australia. Water supplies are a constraint on campsites. Capacity to carry at least four litres is vital. Details are provided in the stage notes.

Stage notes. The route is described in sections. Distances are given. A small party with some experience can expect to cover 1, 2 and 3 kilometres an hour over heavily covered (tall or medium forest), lightly covered (open forest, low scrub or heath) and open (firm beach or track) ground respectively. There are no really long climbs or descents. This rule of thumb does not allow for long stops, strong head winds and so on.

Windy Harbour to Gardner River, 9½ kilometres

The beach east of Windy to the Gardner River is straightforward, if occasionally narrow. Carry water from Windy as the Gardner is often brackish. There are rather uninviting ruins of a fishing shack at the end of Tragedy Road up the west side of the estuary. Reasonably sheltered campsites with views across the mouth and up river can be found amongst the beach dunes.

Gardner River to West Cliff Point, 16½ kilometres via beach, 23 kilometres via Lake Maringup

The direct route to West Cliff Point along the beach passes small flows of fresh water over the beach after 4½, 9 and 10 kilometres. A track emerges near the 9 kilometre point. Reasonably protected campsites exist beside this track a little way inland. The detour to Lake Maringup rejoins the beach here. After a storm, nautilus shells can be found intact on this beach. Fish Creek flows on to the beach shortly before the point. Besides Lake Maringup, it is the most reliable natural water source between Windy and Clifty Head. Cross the creek and climb up the blow-out behind the point. A shack with water tanks overlooks the second cove beyond West Cliff Point. (A sand track also leaves the beach just before Fish Creek, heading inland to Deeside Coast and Chesapeake Roads.)

The worthwhile detour into Lake Maringup and the karri forest is best begun on the Gardner River estuary opposite the shack ruins. Climb on to the dunes and avoid low lying areas that are likely to be soggy by following the ridges. Go due east for 1 kilometre then swing more northerly to travel parallel the river on a ridge for 4 kilometres. Turn back to due east for the final kilometre to the track that approaches Maringup from the north-west. Follow this track through the karri, branch down the west side and round to the south side of the lake. The walk into this point from the Gardner River is about 8 kilometres and mainly easy going. From the middle of the south side of the lake a track heads due south; it leads almost to the coast. A more interesting route back to the beach turns left off this track just over 1 kilometre from the lake, and follows more or less easterly, in the protection of sand ridges and peppermint woodland. After 3½ kilometres take the right turn at the Moore homestead and head south-westerly back to the

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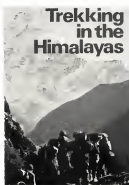
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beach. Camping near Lake Maringup and as above.

West Cliff Point to Broke Inlet, 9 kilometres

The next water is at Banksia Camp, just east of Cliff Head some 24 kilometres and at least 12 hours walking down the coast. Top up if you do not have a cache at the mouth of Broke Inlet.

Follow the track from West Cliff Point that diverges inland and down the coast. Leave it and parallel the coast once the going looks easier. Because of the gullies running back from the cliff top the walking is often easier up to 1 kilometre inland. Detours can be made back along ridges to cliffs for a look over the edge. Head down to the beach leading to Broke Inlet as soon as possible. In heavy seas the last point of this beach may be closed off forcing a short detour up and inland.

Broke Inlet to Banksia Camp, 15 kilometres

If you are short of water it may be possible to obtain supplies at a fishing shack a few kilometres back up the inlet's seaward arm and on the northern side. This bank falls steeply into the inlet. The walk is certainly easier along the top. The water supply is uncertain.

Follow the beach at the mouth of the inlet and select a route up the steep talus of the broken cliff-line. Once on top the view down the coast to Cliff Head and Chatham Island is spectacular, as are the views inland over the inlet. The first part of the route follows the cliff top. There is no need to set inland until beyond the blunt head 8 kilometres down coast. It is possible, although difficult, to drop back to several small beaches at the cliff base. A swim and a driftwood camp fire are strong incentives. A climb back up at the blunt head is straightforward. From here the trig at Mt Cliff Head is the next objective. Going inland, and behind Cliff Head, avoids the matted vegetation of the ragged cliffline. Don't be surprised at the enormous size of the kangaroos



**Western Australia
South Coast**
Point d'Entrecasteaux to

0 5 1

who, bar a few cattle, mostly have this country to themselves. From Mt Clifty Head the route becomes apparent. Mandalay Beach and the granite headlands beyond are visible. Descend from the trig using the broad depressions to work inland behind subsequent rises. Drop down to the track that leads eventually to the fishing shack back from the beach. Use some of the maze of tracks around here to get over to the next, beautifully curved, beach. There is a spring with copious fresh water at the western end of the beach amongst the granite. This beach makes quite a good campsite. Several other springs emerge around its half kilometre curve. From here on water is not a problem. It is possible to walk out to the highway from here along Mandalay Beach Road (about 10 kilometres).

Banksia Camp to Long Point, 7 kilometres

Climb out of the eastern end of the beach and pick up a track that passes the end of a sand ridge set back from the edge of the cliffs leading to Mandalay Beach. Follow the ridge east and down to the track that leads to the beach. At the other end of the beach it is usually possible to follow the base of the cliffs to Little Long Point. Just before this point it is necessary to skirt round the slopes leading into several small rocky coves. In particularly rough conditions it may be necessary to head inland behind the cliffline at the eastern end of Mandalay. There is reliable water at the west end of the beach before Long Point. Follow the creek until a track is reached. There is sheltered camping at the track head.

Long Point to Mt Hopkins, 10 kilometres

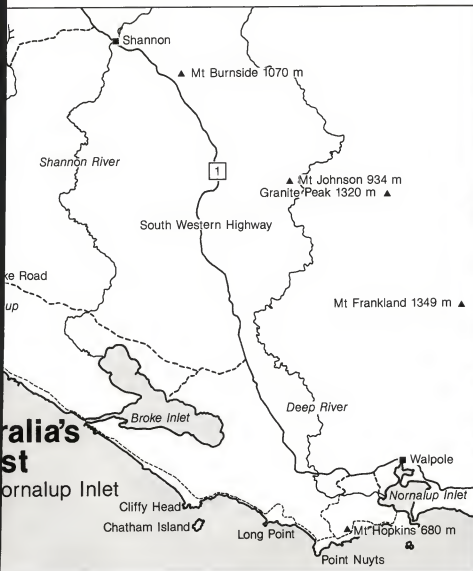
Follow the track, Long Point Road, inland and turn right 1½ kilometres in from the beach. Continue 1 kilometre to turn left on to a track to the north of the granite ridge before Hush Hush Beach. Vehicles are prohibited in the part of the Walpole-Nornalup National Park that lies ahead. Drop down on to the

beach and follow its brief length. Carefully pick a route amongst the limestone rubble for the 1½ kilometres through to Lost Beach. Only on calm days is it possible to consider camping down on these beaches. There is a small spring flowing on to Lost Beach. Climb up from the beach to meet an old track heading in the direction of Mt Hopkins. As the track descends the other side of the Point Nuyts ridge a new section of the coastline opens out. The tors of Hopkins come into view. Follow the track to a T intersection. Leaving the track, head straight on for Hopkins. Water can be obtained from the springs that feed into Thompson Cove. There is a choice of campsites close to water both on and off the coast. Continue to the peak, making use of vague tracks in this vicinity. The view is more than worth the little effort it takes to get on to the out-crop.

Mt Hopkins to Nornalup Inlet, 5½ kilometres

From Mt Hopkins the walker can choose to go out north to the Deep River using the track that was crossed on the way from Lost Beach, a total distance of 7 kilometres. There is a foot-bridge over the river and easy vehicle access from the highway.

Continuing to Nornalup Inlet requires pre-arranged canoe or dinghy transport for the 3 kilometre trip round the Inlet and across the Deep River to the Isle Road landing. From the top of Mt Hopkins go north-east to the large, flat outcrop at the edge of the forest, then down to the north. Once clear of the forest turn east and back to the coast, using the creek a little over 1 kilometre before Grinto the ocean. Watch for king waves. Continue to Circus Beach by hugging the coast. Two foot-tracks cross back to the Inlet from the beach. The mouth of the Inlet is worth the trip, but the first track returns closer to the mouth of the Deep River. •

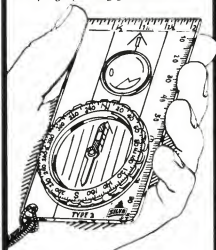


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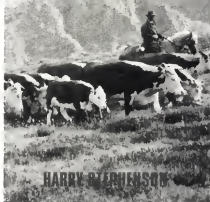


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Reviews

Discovering the Prom on Foot (National Parks Service and Victorian National Parks Association, 1982, RRP \$3.90).

The National Parks Service of Victoria and the Victorian National Parks Association have recently co-operated to publish *Discovering the Prom on Foot*, a guide to 22 walks in Wilsons Promontory National Park. It incorporates previous brochures published by the Service that were distributed free.

The 64 page book is a handy size (12.5 centimetres x 17.5 centimetres) for carrying in a rucksack and for referral during a walk. As well as the index map, it contains larger scale maps for all but three of the walks described.

Most of the 17 half-day and day walks are described in detail, mainly as nature walks—an enjoyable way of becoming familiar with the amazingly diverse flora of the Prom (over 700 species). Sketches, diagrams and black and white photographs are used to advantage in presenting the information.

The five overnight walks (called 'hikes') are described briefly, but directions are scarcely necessary; the tracks concerned are well-worn and mostly well signposted. The book also contains notes about Park regulations, preparing for walks on the Prom and sources of further information.

Given that the book describes only walks along obvious tracks and that walking off tracks is not permitted, readers may well wonder whether this book offers anything to walkers who prefer to visit wild places. Certainly, it is an excellent introduction to an outstanding National Park, particularly for visitors to Victoria, and to those Victorians visiting it for the first time. Provided you avoid the peak period (November to March), it is not difficult to feel very remote on the Prom, especially along the east coast beaches, second to none almost anywhere in Australia.

This National Park also poses a different sort of challenge to walkers, one which has not been universally welcomed. It is the challenge to accept the restrictions imposed on freedom of movement in order to ensure that the tracks and campsites are not overused. At the Prom it is necessary to obtain a permit before setting out on an overnight walk and numbers at campsites are regulated in accordance with their carrying capacity.

Walkers will soon realize that there is much more to the Prom than the places accessible by the existing tracks. Three major peaks, including the highest, are out of bounds, as is a large part of the coastline. Perhaps the time has come to suggest that a new track or two would help spread the visitor load. Such tracks should not be of freeway standard, little more than negotiable routes would do, with the objective of making it possible to do a four or five days' walk in the Park, something that should be available in a Park of this quality.

Sandra Bardwell

First Across the Roof of the World by Graeme Dingle and Peter Hillary (Hodder and Stoughton, 1982, RRP \$24.95).

If I had a year to spare (and enough money) this is just the kind of holiday I might plan: a long, challenging walk in a fascinating area.

Peter Hillary (son of Sir Edmund) and Graeme Dingle claim to be the first to traverse the Himalayas from Sikkim to Pakistan. This is

a significant achievement of endurance and logistics, and must make the writers among the most experienced Himalayan trekkers around.

But at times the authors take themselves and their achievement a little too seriously, trying to squeeze drama from a trip in which their greatest exploits seem to be the beating of local bush bureaucrats. To place the undertaking in perspective, the authors do trek 5,000 kilometres, but climb no major peaks, travel through large cities and cross from India to Pakistan via New Delhi! Colourful as their epic journey was, it scarcely compares in personal commitment and risk to, say, a major mountaineering expedition.

Having made this qualification, the book remains a readable account, well supported by maps and with some fine photographs (although some technically defective ones as well). It presents a trekker's insight to both the unique culture and the magnificent scenery of the Himalayas.

Field Guide: Stewart Island Plants by Hugh Wilson (Field Guide Publications, 1982, RRP \$17.25).

Undoubtedly the work of a dedicated plantsman and graphic perfectionist, this book is a beautifully produced field guide to the plants of Stewart Island, New Zealand.

Don't be misled by the title and think its use is site specific. Although the guide is designed for Stewart Island, many of the species in it are also found throughout the South Island and parts of the North Island. The author suggests that when used in conjunction with his companion guide, *Wild Plants of Mr Cook National Park*, it should permit recognition of a large proportion of New Zealand's native and naturalized flora. As Stewart Island's vegetation represents a surviving fragment of the ancient rainforests of Gondwanaland (the area which millions of years ago shed the Australian land mass and which floated north to impinge on the Malayan archipelago), it is a useful reference for the flora of Tasmania also, which occurs within a similar climatic type.



In production and lay-out the book is visually delightful and stunningly comprehensive. Included in it are all the species of leafy and conspicuous plants known to the author to be wild on Stewart Island and its surrounding smaller islands. All 580 vascular species native to the island are illustrated and described, a formidable task, particularly when presented in such a compact and readable format.

The author has admirably extended the scope of the guide to include the more conspicuous 'lower plants' such as mosses, lichens, fungi and liverworts. Some of the most noticeable intertidal seaweeds have been included, and there is an extensive coverage of water plants, grasses and grass-like plants, ferns and fern-allies.

A glossary and notes on relevant drawings provide assistance to those not botanically adept. In fact the entire book is intended to be equally useful to both the interested but un-knowing person and the professional botanist.

The exquisite coloured plates, although less numerous than the black and white illustrations which are all hand drawn by Hugh Wilson, are in themselves adequate reason to obtain a copy of this most attractive guide.

Francine Giffedder

Useful Wild Plants in Australia by AB & JW Cribb (Fontana, 1982, RRP \$5.95).

This is the latest contribution in paperback form by Dr and Mrs Cribb and one that displays their great interest and knowledge of the many and varied uses of Australian native plants. *Wild Food in Australia* (1975) and *Wild Medicine in Australia* (1981) are their previously released, and very popular, books.

Useful Wild Plants in Australia is recommended as a general description of the many, and often quaint, uses of some of the 20,000 native plant species in Australia. From the point of view of man's direct utilization, the authors recognize that many of these plants are insignificant. What they provide is an informative guide to some of the particular purposes, both historic and current, for which some of the species have been used.

Its format makes the book a ready reference and it should be of interest to people interested in the simple life, based on the use of natural products. It is probable that the North American 'homesteading' movement, with its rekindling of interest in crafts of the land, would be similarly attracted to this book.

Those with an affinity to the natural world who delight in a knowledge of the native flora, will be able to extend their knowledge to use of plants and plant products for such scientific purposes as production of oils, timbers, grazing and browsing for animals, the use of vegetable dyes and decoration. One unfortunate oversight is the authors' failure to mention the ornamental use of the blackened and gnarled banksia seedpods. It was from the fruiting cone of *banksia serrata* that the 'bad banksia men' of *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie* fame were drawn.

FG

Wild Medicine in Australia by AB & JW Cribb (Collins, 1981, RRP \$14.95).

With their book, *Wild Medicine in Australia*, Dr Alan Cribb and his wife Joan have produced a most interesting and scholarly work. It brings together a wealth of information on the vast range of native and introduced

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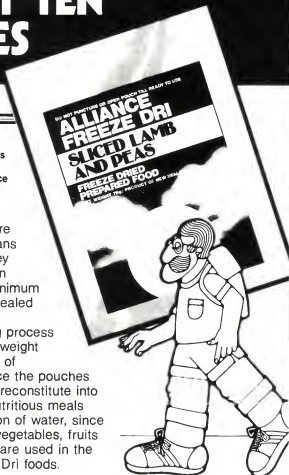
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292 pages, hard cover, 90 photos, ISBN 0 904405 96 6 (UK ten pounds ninety-five pence) Cordee 249 Knighton Church Road Leicester Great Britain (available by post adding one pound surface mail or six pounds air mail)

species of plants which were used to treat the various ailments of the aborigines and early European settlers, and also details treatments still finding favour.

The intention has not been to recommend plant remedies in place of modern medical treatments, but to document historical and contemporary uses and draw attention to the potential that still exists for further research into medicinal uses of Australian plants. After all, aspirin was originally extracted from willow bark, digitalis from foxgloves and morphine from poppies. Who knows what useful medicines remain to be discovered?

Presented in hardback, the book is reasonably priced and will be a popular addition to the libraries of native flora enthusiasts.

Steve Bennett

Handbook: The Central Plateau of Tasmania (Tasmanian Lands Department, 1982, RRP \$4.00).

For the amateur natural historian and the interested tourist, this attractive handbook is a bargain, with much of its information applicable throughout the State.

Complete with 11 colour plates and a useful 1:250,000 map of the area, this excellent publication gives concise details on an array of topics that includes history, climate, geology, mammals, reptiles, birds, amphibians, fish, syncardia (I'll leave you in the dark about that one!), insects and, finally, a very interesting chapter on the diversity of vegetation and the ecological factors influencing the plant communities. The map is designed for the tourist and shows major and minor roads, but other facilities, such as camping areas, are not indicated. Unfortunately the attractive colour plates have no captions.

The Central Plateau has been poorly managed in the past and many areas sadly show the signs of human abuse. Hopefully this booklet may help lead to a greater appreciation of the beauty and sensitivity of the region, and perhaps may contribute to more balanced management.

A book of excellent value: highly recommended.

Louise Giffedder

Kosciusko Alpine Flora by AB Costin, M Gray, CJ Totterdell and DJ Wimbush (Paperback Edition, CSIRO/Collins, 1979, RRP \$19.95).

This book, while concentrating on the flora, also gives concise summaries of the geologic and climatic history and general features of the Kosciusko area. Reference maps show major physiographic and other habitat features of the region such as lakes, cliffs, scree, tracks and eroded areas. Colour maps delineate the distribution of the main vegetation communities.

The photography shows the various types of vegetation in their natural habitats, as well as close-up shots of individual species. The reproductions are true to life, perhaps the one disappointment being that there is no indication of scale in some close-ups.

In addition to being a complete botanical guide, the book is useful as an overall ecological/historical guide to the Kosciusko area. Detailed botanical descriptions, distribution and habitat are given for each plant. A detailed glossary makes plant identification possible for botanists and less knowledgeable enthusiasts alike.

Kosciusko Alpine Flora combines the ecological expertise of the four authors. The cheaper, paperback edition will be welcomed by many people as a reliable source of both detailed and general information on the ecology of the Kosciusko area.

Jennie Whinam



Bill Waters. Alan Wilson

The Heysen Trail: Encounter Bay to the Barossa Valley edited by T Lavender, D Corbett and D Whitelock (South Australian Government Printer, 1982, RRP \$9.50).

The Heysen Trail concept has captured the imagination of walkers in South Australia. On completion it will run from Cape Jervis to the south of Adelaide through the Adelaide Hills and the central and northern Flinders Ranges to Mt Babbage. Effective work began in 1976. At this stage about 220 kilometres have been established in the Adelaide Hills, stretching from Encounter Bay to the Barossa Valley, and it is proving popular with both day- and long distance walkers.

The printing and production of the book are excellent, with many colour and black and white photographs to illustrate the type of country traversed and items of interest.

In addition to the basic track notes, several specialists have contributed sections in fields of expertise covering geology, social history, ornithology and botany. The early chapters provide good summaries in each of these areas and should stimulate considerable interest. Walkers wishing to learn more on specific subjects will need to consult specialist field guides referred to in the reading list at the back of the book since there is insufficient space to illustrate the many plant and bird species listed.

The latter half of the book is devoted to different sections of the Trail; each has a map with separate track notes and information on botany, geology, social history and birds. I found this section more difficult to cope with, and would prefer a more integrated approach which incorporated all aspects in the one text to make it easier for the walker on the Trail to follow.

Some minor factual and typographical errors occur, but the book is a valuable first attempt to provide information on the established sections of the Trail. Walkers will need, however, to purchase the separately published 1:50,000 maps of the Trail as many parts of the track are not covered in the book.

Peter Beer

China Collator by Martyn Paterson and Lucie Lolicato (Published by the authors, 1983, RRP \$8.95).

Martyn Paterson and Lucie Lolicato have produced a useful guide to China for the budget traveller. It would have been a better piece of work, however, if the authors had not sought to make 'quickie' political and historical judgements about the country. This has led to the inclusion of irritating statements like the following: 'Several centuries of history have left there (sic) mark on China ...' I suppose they have. There are also statements that are altogether too superficial, such as: 'The widely worn greys and blues of the uniforms of the Han Chinese, seem to extend to the minds and

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homelife as well...; an absurd generalization as anyone who has lived in China in the late 1970s and early 1980s would attest.

That said, *China Collator*—as the book is curiously titled—has a good deal of useful information for the adventurer who wishes to see China the hard way. Paterson and Lolicato proved themselves keen observers and good reporters in a number of instances. Their list of what to take to China was as contemporary and as useful as any I've seen in other guide books... from tampons to multivitamins.

The book's chief value is that it tells the traveller who doesn't wish to join a tour group how to get into China and what to do once there. The Chinese have now made it possible for individuals to travel throughout the country without being part of a group, and without having to pay the several thousand dollars that most tourists cost.

The authors have covered most of the tourist centres and some out of the way places as well. They showed themselves resourceful adventurers by making it to both Tibet and Qinghai province—two places effectively out of bounds to the ordinary traveller. But the chapter on Tibet was spoiled, I thought, by a rather florid account of the conflict between the followers of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese authorities. Instead of evoking the splendours of Tibet, the authors treat us to a diatribe against Chinese occupation which, of course, has at times been repressive, even brutal, but does the traveller need this fact rammed down his throat by a supercilious sentence like this: 'The Chinese revolutionary army decided just after Liberation in the early 1950s that the oppressed and downtrodden people of Tibet should be enlightened as to the freedoms and advantages of Chinese-style communism?'

China Collator has a good section on train travel—the best way to go in China—and many useful hints about hotel accommodation, bus travel, eating and what to see and do in more than a dozen Chinese cities. It tells you, for example, where to hire a bicycle in Peking. It also includes some rough sketch maps of major Chinese cities which don't appear to have been drawn to scale, but may be useful. The authors say in their conclusion that their main objective was to 'plant seeds'. That they do, although at times Paterson and Lolicato have laid on a bit much fertilizer.

Tony Walker

WF (Bill) Waters, A Biography by Harry Stephenson (The Scout Association, 1982, RRP \$10.00).

Bill Waters was a major figure in the development of bushwalking and ski touring in Victoria. As well as being something of a pioneer in these fields, he also contributed organizationally through the Melbourne Walking Club and the Rover Scouts.

Harry Stephenson has compiled a newsy biography, the sales proceeds of which will go towards maintenance of the Rover Lodge on the Bogong High Plains. The book is untidily produced, but portrays an adventurous man who used his energies to extend the horizons of bushwalkers and skiers.

BW

On Edge: The Life and Climbs of Henry Barber by Chip Lee (Cordee, 1983).

Henry Barber's visit to Australia in 1975 was arguably the greatest single 'shot in the arm' this country's climbing has had. The appearance of a biography of Barber (still in his twenties!) is therefore likely to be of considerable interest to local climbers.

Unfortunately they, and other readers, will probably be disappointed that Lee's obvious hero worship of his subject is sickly, particularly on the topics of Henry and the media and 'Henry's' women. The photo reproductions are generally dull.

The chapter on Australia (24 pages) is

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interesting, and Barber is certainly a colourful, many would say 'prickly', character, but this book is not a milestone in climbing literature.

Chris Baxter

Total Alpinism by Rene Desmaison (Granada, 1982, RRP \$36.00).

Not strictly a full autobiography, *Total Alpinism* is a translation of a combination of two books by this French mountaineer who was a dominant force in Alpine climbing during the 1960s and 1970s.

The first half of the book outlines Desmaison's major climbs. Done mostly as first winter ascents, they are a collection virtually unequalled in climbing history.

In the second half Desmaison gives his account of his epic struggles on his new route on the fabled Walker Butte in the French Alps. This is the most gripping climbing writing I have read. Desmaison's efforts under the conditions encountered (which killed his partner) surely rank as one of the greatest human achievements ever.

The 24 black and white photos are generally poor and the book's price seems extreme. But in a world of hype and mediocrity, victories of the will over seemingly insuperable odds are not common. It is a bonus when they are described by a controversial individualist who also has the gift of lively communication.

CB

The Mount Cook Guidebook by Hugh Logan (New Zealand Alpine Club, 1982, RRP \$10.00).

Whilst obviously produced more with H

Henry Barber in Australia. Chris Baxter



frame pack than shirt pocket in mind, this substantial book is a step towards bringing New Zealand alpine guide books out of the ice age. There is no risk of having your 'wilderness experience' ruined with too much description, but grades, at least, are given for climbs.

Production is excellent with colour covers, good printing and paper and numerous outstanding photo-diagrams showing the routes. For the first time the West Coast climbs are described in a major guidebook, but paradoxically only when the most relevant hut (Pioneer) is out of action!

CB

Mt Buffalo: A Rockclimbers Guide by Kevin Lindorff and Jeremy Boreham (Victorian Climbing Club, 1983, RRP \$8.25).

If there has been one thing sorely needed for a long time it is an up-to-date and worthwhile guide book to Australia's premier granite climbing area. This book goes some distance towards that.

Modestly produced, as entertaining as steamed pudding and somewhat pricey, *Mt Buffalo* none the less is basically accurate, fair and current. Stars (for quality) are tight for non-Lindorff routes in general and aid routes in particular. The spartan descriptions will leave climbing historians frustrated and newcomers lost in the bowels of the Gorge (with not even rudimentary diagrams to help them find their way out).

As usual there are a few errors, such as the leader of the first ascent of False Modesty. Good photos are a bonus.

CB

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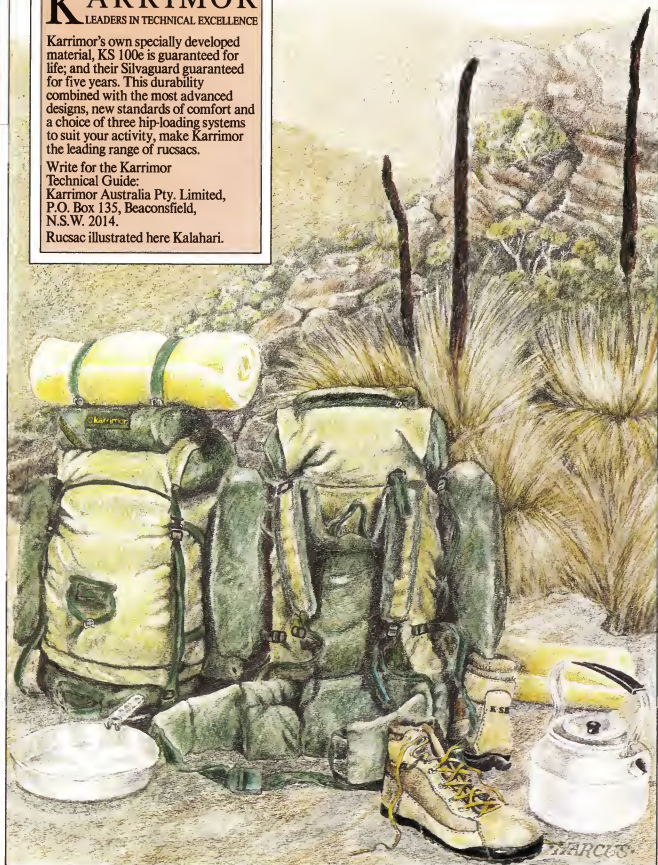
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A peaceful scene on the Franklin, photo Bob Brown / TWS

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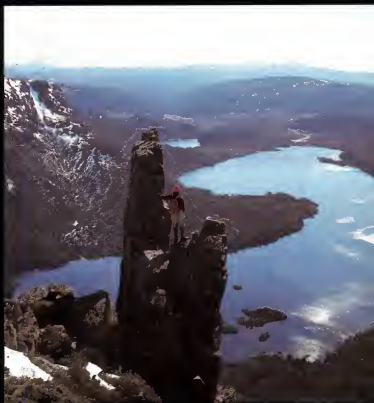
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Climbers Guide to Kaputar by Mark Colyvan
and John Lattanzio (Published by the authors,
1983, RRP \$7.50).

A similar production to the Mt Buffalo guide,
this book has, in addition, a sensible protective
plastic sleeve and good cliff plans and
diagrams. The photos are reasonable, the
descriptions detailed and the climbing looks
good. An unusual feature is the inclusion of a
number of cartoons.

CB

Bushwalking in Papua New Guinea edited
by Riall Nolan (Lonely Planet, 1983, RRP \$6.95).

This is a book of track notes. Compiled in
1976-7, it might be a little dated where changes
have occurred.

The notes are clear and supported by
attractive maps and photographs. There is an
informative introduction covering the country
itself and giving advice on planning, equipment
and health precautions. Also included is a
bibliography, a list of addresses of official
bodies you may wish to contact, and a glossary
of Hiri Motu—widely spoken lingua franca in
Papua New Guinea.

BW

Tramping in New Zealand by Jim du Fresne
(Lonely Planet, 1982, RRP \$6.95).

This paperback is in the same series as
Nolan's on Papua New Guinea. Jim du Fresne
is not a Kiwi but an Alaskan, who spent some
months in New Zealand to compile these track
notes.

The book describes 20 of the more popular
tracks in New Zealand. There are maps,
photographs and information of interest to
trampers.

BW

Forestry Tasmania (Forestry Commission of
Tasmania, 1981, RRP \$2.60).

Essentially, this 1-600,000 map is a public
relations exercise for the Tasmanian Forestry
Commission; it outlines the Commission's role
in the commercial utilization of forests. The
map is supported by pictorial material and
assorted facts on forestry and related
industries, but sadly no importance is placed
on the non-commercial values of forests, such
as wilderness conservation and recreation.

In some respects the map is useful, but an
outstanding omission is the boundaries of
the State's timber concession and reserve system,
which are essential to the understanding of
the management practices of Tasmanian forests.

At \$2.60, this map is not outstanding value.
LG

Pioneering East Gippsland by Denis O'Bryan
(Published by the author, 1983, RRP, \$4.95).

This is a small (60 page) paperback which
is rather expensive at \$4.95.

It does not deal with East Gippsland as a
whole but presents snippets of information in
relation to the Cann River, Orbost and Bendoc
regions.

BW

Kongur: China's Elusive Summit by Chris
Bonington (Hodder & Stoughton, 1982, RRP
\$29.95).

The tried and true formula of a substantial,
well-bound and printed volume, many good
(frequently colour) photos, detailed appendices
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CB

Other Titles Received

Annapurna: A Woman's Place by Arlene Blum
(Granada, 1980, RRP, \$29.95).

Everest by Walt Unsworth (Paperback Edition,
Penguin, 1982, RRP \$12.95).

Peaks, Passes and Glaciers edited by Walt
Unsworth (Paperback Edition, Penguin, 1982,
RRP \$9.95).

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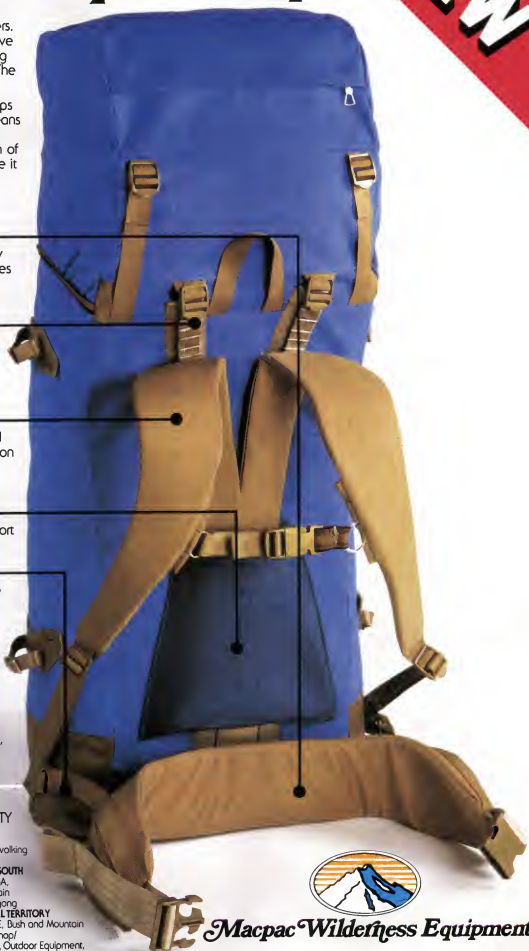
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Equipment

• **Light Tent.** Hallmark have produced a new tunnel tent called the Chrysalis. The name evokes images of a weary bushwalker, with sore shoulders, aching legs and blistered feet, retiring for the night and cocooning himself in the Chrysalis, to emerge renewed and invigorated next morning. Unfortunately it did not fully live up to expectations.

Single-skin, double-hoop, tunnel tents have been with us for some time. Tapering down from a large hoop at one end to a small one at the other, the Chrysalis has the advantage of a vestibule or porch at the large end where you are able to stow wet, muddy gear and cook separately from the main sleeping area. Essential for Australian summers, a fly-screen door is provided. The tent is cosy but with just enough room for two people and their gear.

The Chrysalis is made of Klimate, a fabric similar to Gore-Tex in that it is supposed to breathe and be waterproof at the same time. Eager to check out the waterproofness of Klimate, I took the tent home and pitched it in Melbourne's drought-breaking rains. Happily, the material stayed dry inside, although there was some leakage along seams — easily cured by using the large tube of seam sealer supplied by Hallmark. To test breathability, the only way was to sleep in it, and over Easter we had perfect testing conditions.

The first night was cold with heavy mist and light rain. The Klimate failed, with condensation dripping all night. The second night was cold and frosty, and again the Klimate performed badly, with the condensation freezing, only to melt when the sun rose. The last night started off mild and finished warm and wet. At last the Klimate worked. (A subsequent test on a fine, cool night resulted in heavy condensation. All tests involved two occupants.)

While the shape of the tent is adequate for shedding rain, it is unsuitable for snow. The large area of unsupported, flatish roof would quickly become burdened down. Being single skin, it also lacks the insulating layer of double skin tents.

Two minor criticisms: the tent pegs supplied resemble giant nails. Easy to push in, they are difficult to extract. Two inner pockets for storage are handy, but are in the way at shoulder height. They should be positioned further down the tent.

The Chrysalis seems to be durable, something one has come to expect of Hallmark. It is quite possible that it will prove to be a fine, ultra-lightweight tent for warm climates, but from my experience, it does not appear to function properly in the cold. RRP \$387.

Tom Millar

• **Buckets of Water.** Wine buffs have been using wine cask linings as water carriers for some time, but there's always a vague taste of stale wine. For the gear freaks, Mont have encased clean linings in Cordura. (Mont, incidentally, have recently revised the design of their Bheesty, doubling its capacity.) However, the traditional alternative has been the Paddymade jagara water bucket.

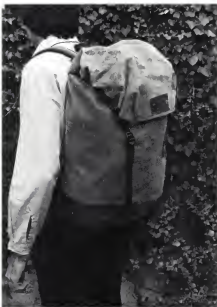
Now Outgear have produced a competitor to the Paddymade bucket. Similar in design, it is made of proofed polyester-cotton and has a nylon coil zip at the top. Tape handles are much

kinder on the hands when carrying a full load. The Outgear water bucket retails for about \$10.

TM

• **Big Top.** Mont, the down gear manufacturer from Canberra, are soon to enter the competitive tent market with a three- to four-person tunnel tent called the Epoch 3.

The tent weighs only 3.2 kilograms which is remarkably light for such a roomy tent. Three external aluminium hoops pitch it with a minimum of fuss. The inner and outer walls are attached by stretchy Lycra fabric. Because the outer takes most of the strain, the inner can Top, High Tops Kanangra pack. Dave Noble. Fall Dr Furst's test for budding gear freaks (pages 27-28)? Don't worry, here's your chance to hit the big time with Wild Leitz's night-vision goggles. (Got yours yet, Wayne?)

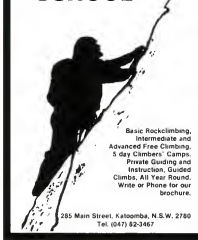


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be made of extremely light fabric, one of the main weight saving areas.

By unzipping the floor at either end, the large bell ends can double as vestibules. Two large fly-screen doors are provided for summer use. The Epoch 3 will retail for about \$500.

With most of the competition coming from overseas, it is refreshing to see an Australian manufacturer designing a tent with attention to detail.

TM

● **High Tops.** Tom Williams of Glenbrook, New South Wales, has been making packs, mainly for use by his bushwalking friends, for the last six years.

Tom's packs were developed to be suitable for the rough terrain of the northern Blue Mountains. They were designed to be lightweight, strong and durable, suitable for rock scrambling and pack hauling up abrasive sandstone cliffs and easy to swim with through canyons.

Over the years, Tom has modified and improved his original design and produces four standard models under the label of High Tops Equipment. They are all frameless with padded shoulder straps and a variety of other features. The fabric used is a strong cotton-terylene mix, and the three larger models have a Cordura-reinforced bottom.

The models and their prices (April 1983) are: Daypack \$18 — for day walks, canyoning and climbing. Kananga \$35 — large day pack or for lightweight week-end walking. Yodeller \$68 — for week-end and extended trips. Tassie Expedition \$75 — for extended trips.

The last two models feature padded backs. Features such as shoulder strap placement, pockets and ice-axe straps can be made to the customer's requirements.

As a user of these packs for many years, I can strongly recommend them. They have certainly proved themselves in the thickest Tasmanian scrub and are also ideal for ski touring. They all represent excellent value.

More information can be obtained from High Tops Equipment, listed in the Wild Suppliers Directory.

Dave Nable

● **Firefly.** For several years the MSR XGK stove has been considered by many to be the most sophisticated and efficient of its type. It was developed as a lightweight, high output field stove for the mountaineer and walker.

MSR have now produced a new stove. It has the same high output as the XGK and can be more compact if the windshield is left behind. It has more positive control than the XGK with adjustment at the burner giving good simmer control. It is cheaper than the XGK and about the same weight.

However, unlike the XGK, the Firefly does not have multi-fuel capability and does not have a flint striker. It is harder to heat up during priming and more erratic during burning than the XGK model. The unbendable windshield supplied with the Firefly is bulky and susceptible to damage. The importers have informed me that they will try to get the old XGK style shield supplied with their future shipments of Fireflies.

The Firefly is currently available at an introductory price of \$75 from Bush & Mountain Sports and Nordic Ski & Backpacking but is expected to retail from approximately \$86 in the future.

Wayne Maher

● **Plastic Kayaks.** A new company with New Zealand origins, Current Craft Australia, is producing a general purpose kayak made from polyethylene. This material is said to be unusually durable, making this kayak, the Intruder, suitable for beginners and school use.



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Whilst heavier and more expensive, it is claimed that the intruder will outlast several fibreglass kayaks.

Overseas there have been drownings when people have been caught in plastic kayaks folding over, but Current Craft claim that they have reinforced the cockpit with a 'Lifeage' which, they say, will not distort, allowing the paddler to escape. (We have not, however, had the opportunity to obtain independent assessment of the effectiveness of this.) The intruder will normally retail for \$550 but as an introductory offer is available for \$490.

• **Snow News.** Salomon have introduced an important new ski touring boot and binding system. The binding has a long central ridge under the ball of the foot which mates with a compatible groove in the sole of the boot giving, it is claimed, more precise ski control. A 'flex plate' transfers the flex function of the boot sole to the binding which is said to permit a longer stride. Salomon is also the first ski touring system to have the convenience of a vertical entry step-in binding.

Canberra's Wild Country is importing 'hi-tech' American snow shoes, called Wombats in Australia, which have a number of features that should appeal to gear freaks and be superior to those normally available. In any event, \$220 or more out of your wallet should make you less likely to sink into the snow!

For the really hardy ski tourist where warmth is more important than warmth the impressive new lightweight sleeping bag from J&H, the Dandelion, is worth investigating.

• **Kiwi Gear.** Hallmark have recently released their 52-page 1983 catalogue with remarkable design similarities to a well-known weekly news magazine. As well as information about new products such as 'the most advanced pack in the world', the MF90, and their interesting laminated fibreglass clothing, there are articles on rucksack sports. These include superficial rucksack sports instruction and information about National Parks on both sides of the Tasman.

For decades Eidex have been renowned for their japara parkas. Recent interest in 'breathable waterproofs' has resulted in Eidex producing parkas and overtrousers in Entrant, a Japanese answer to Gore-Tex.

The samples we inspected were a rather dull khaki colour but well sewn. The overtrousers are very simple, with no zips at the ankles, an elasticized waist and one pocket slash for access to inner clothing. The parka has a number of good features including elasticized storm cuffs, Velcro closure over the zip and three storm pockets. However there is a number of features we didn't like. If you are tall you will find the sizes rather short and the lack of a fastener at the hem, below the zip, results in further wetting. Climbers will have trouble fitting the hood over a helmet. The stud-down extra layer on the shoulders is not normally seen in modern parkas but may help in heavy rain. Neither garment has sealed seams. Not yet available, they are to be distributed in Australia by Richards McCallum.

Freeze dried foods have not always been delicious but the two new varieties available from Alliance, Savoury Spaghetti and Smoked Fish with Parsley Sauce add welcome variety and flavour to the bushwalker's larder. The samples we tested were particularly popular in our hungry group.

• **Trainer.** Heading up-market, Mountain Designs have introduced a short zip jacket, the Trainer, which has elasticized cuffs, waist and neck. In shimmering Gore-Tex, it looks very smart but is not designed for wilderness use. RRP about \$100.

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Contributors

Bill Bachman, 30, grew up in the United States but has lived in Australia for the last ten years.

Formerly managing editor of *Fall-Line*, the Australian skiing magazine, he has specialized in ski writing and photography since 1976. A fully-certified ski instructor, he spends much of every winter in the mountains, photographing everything from racing action to nature's quieter moments. He has worked on assignment in Canada and New Zealand, and has covered two Olympic Winter Games.

A Melbourne freelancer since 1981, Bill's ski photography has been widely published in Australia and overseas, most notably in the recent Thomas Nelson/Roscoe Publishers book, *Australian Skiing*. Currently branching into other fields, his work has also appeared in *Wild*, *Australian Playboy*, *The Bulletin*, and *Modern Boating*.

Presently in the process of establishing a commercial library of ski photography to supply the advertising and publishing industries, Bill is inviting submissions from photographers with collections of colour transparencies involving any aspect of winter scenery and action.

Fritz Balkau has been engaged in outdoor activities for many years, retaining an involvement in a variety of different pursuits rather than specializing in anything in particular. Through such activities, occasional stints as outdoor instructor, and a professional

work in the Philippines, trying to improve the management of National Parks for adventure travel.

In Australia he remains active in bushwalking and skiing and dabbles in photography. He publishes a ski touring map and claims to have designed and built the ultimate tent for Australian conditions.



Mark Buchanan started bushwalking at the age of 13 while at Yarra Valley School near Melbourne.

He has walked extensively in central and south-west Tasmania over many trips, and rockclimbing seemed a natural progression. Mark has climbed at many crags throughout Victoria, the highlight being an ascent of Ozymandias Direct at Mt Buffalo in just over two days. Later in the same year he had his first taste of more serious alpine climbing at Mt Aspiring in New Zealand, with ascents of the West Buttress of Mt Avalanche and the West Face of Rob Roy.

Mark has been working at Eastern Mountain Centre with his brother-in-law, who opened the business just over three years ago.

Mark is now 20 years of age, and has high aspirations in wilderness adventure.



job in environmental management, he has developed a keen awareness of the value of the natural environment as a balance to our stressed urban existence.

He has travelled extensively overseas and was recently involved in exploration and training

Jeffrey Campbell is an Australian expatriate living in New Delhi, India. Working with a leading Indian trekking company, he has gained an outstanding working knowledge of trekking in the western Himalayas, and of the resulting pressures on scarce and fragile local resources. His interest and great skill in photography has meant that he has been able to capture on film the mood of this spectacular region as few others have done.

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Prop. Chris Welsh

Jonathan Chester has climbed and roamed in many of the world's mountain regions. This predilection for adventure surfaced during his work as a professional scuba diver. After a two-year grand tour climbing in Europe, North America and New Zealand, Jonathan returned to Adelaide. In partnership with George Adams, he then developed Mountain Adventure, an outdoor recreation business.

Since the 1980 Annapurna III expedition he has been back on the road as a freelance photo-journalist concentrating on mountain and expedition photography. Through Mountain Media he now produces audio-visual programmes and lectures on adventure. He is due to return to Annapurna III later this year.

Hugo Furst was born in northern Germany, within sight of the highest parts of the Tiefsen. From the time he was given his first Sporthaus Schuster catalogue he developed an intense interest in mountain equipment, an interest maintained to this day. Since arriving in Australia a few years ago he has established a reputation as an indefatigable authority on the subject and often lectures to school groups and Himalayan trekkers. His recent publications include a survey of disposals shops in *Queensland Outdoors*, a critical road test of four-wheel-drive vehicles in *Fall Liner*, and the book *Snow and Ice Equipment for West Australians*. He was leader of the Australian delegation to the Fifth UNESCO Conference on Mountain Equipment for Developing Countries.

Reg Hatch has been involved in canoeing for 16 years and started in the sport through the now famous Murray Marathon. Australian World Championship coach in 1979 and Olympic coach in 1980, he thoroughly enjoys this sport, and is currently employed as a physical education teacher at Ivanhoe Grammar School, Victoria.

A *Wild* reader, Reg enjoys the contributions of other outdoor enthusiasts as well as those of canoeists.

Ian Maley's interest in the bush and mountains developed in the early 1970s while studying engineering. As his experience in walking, canoeing and mountaineering increased, he turned his efforts to designing and manufacturing backpacking equipment. With Sandra Maley he has established the Fremantle-based manufacturer and retailer Wilderness Equipment.

He divides his time between business, leading the occasional expedition or backpacking week-end, family and active work on river and forest conservation issues in Western Australia.

Although much of his experience is outside Western Australia, his attachment to the local landscape is well established. With the weather, the coastline, the (remaining) forest and the possibility of not seeing anyone else for at least a few days, he believes that the south-west corner of the continent has a great deal to offer.

Meg Thornton developed a strong interest in the outdoors as a student at Sydney University. Her creative talents are professionally directed to architecture with a Sydney-based firm but she has an active interest in photography, writing and design in wilderness-related subjects.

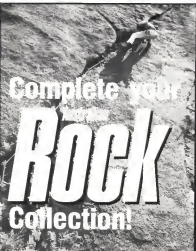
Meg includes rogaining and canyoning among her interests when she is not involved with expedition planning. A recent visit to Nepal awakened her to the Himalayas and she is leading a return trek there early in 1985.



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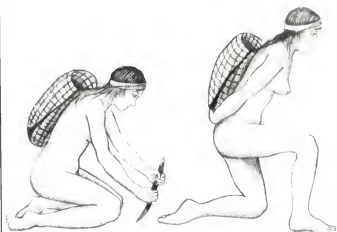
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Wildfire

Bush Drivers Take a Tanning

After reading my autumn issue of *Wild* I was stunned at Brian Tanner's letter on 4WDs. . .

At Wonnangatta Station site a few weeks ago there was a deluge of 4WDs charging in all directions. There are tracks and wheel ruts all about the place. If the 4WDs must go into the Wonnangatta, why don't they stick to the tracks? If a side trip has to be made, why can't they stop, get out of their vehicle, and walk . . . to the point of interest? . . .

At night they had their stereos blaring, there was shouting and revving engines till all hours . . . During the day we had them driving through our camp, which was away from the track, drinking 'stubbies' as they drove and hurling empties out the windows . . . Along with trail bikes . . . they are not only an eyesore but an earsore as well.

It may have been only a few which gave (4WDs) the bad name, but from what I have seen it has fast become the majority. . .

Andrew Millar
Mt Eliza, Vic

In reference to the correspondence on 4WD vehicles . . . I suggest Mr Tanner leaps through a few non-emotional Government reports on the environment. I include a few comments made by various bodies:

1. US Council on Environmental Quality — 8th Report, 1977. 'Off Road Vehicle users are a small percentage of the total population, but the resource damage they cause is out of proportion to their number. . .'
2. US Council of Environmental Quality — 3rd Report, 1972. . . too often these vehicles are operated far from developed trails and roads, damaging fragile ecological areas . . . and conflicting with recreational uses that require solitude.'
3. Australian Dept of Environment and Conservation — 5th Report, October 1975. This

report suggests that 4WD vehicles may cause less damage than other ORVs while used on existing tracks, but when used off these tracks they can cause considerably more damage.

4. The Australian House of Representatives Standing Committee on Environment and Conservation — 3rd Report, March 1977. . . The report concludes that 4WD vehicles should be prohibited from going off-road in areas they set out as being 'fragile' and in all National Parks. It states that even a short off-road journey by a 4WD, from a road to a camping site for example, can be as damaging as any form of off-road activity. The Committee also notes that great damage can be done to forestry trails etc when 4WD vehicles stay on-road.

All these reports emphasized the valuable role that 4WD clubs can play in making their members environmentally aware. However, if Mr Tanner simply wipes out any criticism of 4WD users as being 'emotional poppycock' then I believe that he is forgetting the important environmental duty that attaches itself to the presidency of a 4WD association.

Ian Wheaton
Fulham, SA

As a reader of your excellent magazine, I have been following in recent issues the unfolding story of Howqua River Revisited, the 4WD 'invasion', the damage to the Bluff Hut clearing by 4WDs, and the noting that three Mansfield entrepreneurs are organizing cross country ski tours from the Bluff Hut using an over-snow vehicle as a back-up.

As a cattleman whose family has grazed cattle on the Bluff for many years, as the builder of the Bluff Hut and as one of the three ski entrepreneurs, I would like to add my comments on the issues raised. I have known the Bluff since I was a boy when it was a true

wilderness, and despite the changes made by access tracks, logging, 4WD vehicles and bikes, and by people, the . . . Bluff . . . is still a remote and beautiful place.

Our family spend part of each winter at our hut, and we were most disturbed to see the damage done to the clearing in June by thoughtless drivers. Last spring, we fenced, levelled, sowed and mulched the damage and I am happy to report that it is almost back to its original state.

The only answer, I think, to thoughtless and ignorant people is guidance in the form of barriers across sensitive places, which should include some access tracks, in the bush. If people choose to ignore this type of guidance, the onus is squarely on them. . .

I also would like to assure people that our cross country ski tour over-snow vehicle, will only operate on roads, will keep a low profile and the venture will provide small groups of people with an experience they would never be able to enjoy without expert guidance.

There is room for everyone in the High Country, let's try and compromise so all can enjoy that wonderful area.

Graeme Stoney
Mansfield, Vic

Service With a Smile

In the Wild Information section of your autumn edition of *Wild* there are two items referring to the Victorian National Parks Service that warrant clarification.

The first item was titled 'Buffalo Camp' and here it was claimed that 'Rangers have made things increasingly difficult and restrictive for the annual summer influx of rockclimbers' on the basis of the limited space made available for camping, leading to overcrowding.

Overcrowding has occurred on sites booked by the Victorian Climbing Club (VCC) primarily

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due, I understand, to non-VCC members failing to make their own arrangements and sharing VCC sites instead. Park staff have been lenient in not strictly enforcing the limit of eight persons per site, thereby allowing such persons to use the camp-grounds.

You also reported that 'Rangers are considering limiting camping stays to a short period of, say, a week'. There is no such intention. The existing requirement is to book a site for a *minimum* of one week during the peak season to aid full use of the camp-grounds. Misunderstanding may have arisen over this situation or the actions of Park staff last summer who, after the VCC bookings expired, made available another site for one week only to meet climbers' requests to stay on.

The second item titled 'The Snowy River Next?' reported a rumour that the Service has been considering the opening up of the Snowy River valley for use by tourists in cars. Development of roads to access points at the Little River junction and Jacksons Crossing were given as examples.

The Service is well aware of the values of the area for recreation in remote environments and the need to protect these values when any developments are planned. However, the existing Snowy River National Park is confined to east of the Snowy River. Here, there are no plans to improve vehicle access or toilet facilities at Jacksons Crossing or elsewhere in the environs of the Snowy River, except for campground developments at McKillops Bridge.

The area west of the Snowy River has not yet been declared as a National Park. When this happens, the question of two-wheel-drive access to points such as the junction of the Little River with the Snowy River will be fully considered by the Service. . .

Ken Mawdsley
Secretary
National Parks Service
East Melbourne, Vic

Roll On

Regarding your recently published article 'Don't Knock the Roll' in the summer issue of *Wild*, I would like to make the following comments.

Firstly, I must compliment Paul Grigg on a comprehensive approach, backed by good photographs, to what is usually a difficult subject to cover in written words and pictures. I must point out, however, that some aspects of the article were not consistent with what is considered safe and reliable technique. . . .

The conditions which one encounters in sea and lake conditions do not necessarily relate to white water conditions (ie inland rivers) and often the techniques must be adjusted accordingly.

The Eskimo Roll is one important case in point. The techniques outlined in your article encourages the paddler to lean back on his rear deck as he performs his roll, eg illustration 36, page 37. This technique is to be avoided by the white water paddler for the following reasons:

- Firstly, it exposes the unprotected face and chin to any oncoming rocks: an extremely dangerous practice.
- If the first roll fails (as it often does) the paddler is left upside-down against the rear deck. It is extremely difficult to set up for another roll in fast flowing water from this position. It is also an extremely difficult position from which to effect an exit from the boat if necessary. The author correctly illustrates . . . that one must somersault forward out of a craft so that legs do not

become entangled.

c) Leaning way back will feel easier at first because one has more support on the paddle for a longer length of time, but this tends to minimize the 'hip flick' action which is the essence of an Eskimo Roll. Once in fast moving, aerated water, a paddler can no longer rely on paddle support of the surface to the same extent, and an efficient hip flick becomes essential.

d) Once a paddler has mastered the Pawlata Roll using this 'lay-back' technique, it will be difficult to progress to the more



Execution of the Screw Roll.

commonly used Screw Roll as the paddler does not have the advantage of the longer lever in this roll.

By way of remedy it is recommended that the paddler learns to lean forward ie, face on



Leaning forward at the completion of a Pawlata Roll, the front deck as he/she completes the roll.

This position promotes a much stronger hip flick, minimizes risk of injury and leaves the paddler in a better recovery position.

A notable exception to this technique is the Eskimo Roll performed on a Wave Ski in surf conditions. Due to the lack of buoyancy of the ski, the paddler must lie back flat to lower the centre of gravity to prevent the ski from back-looping during a roll.

Cary Pedicini
Senior Instructor
Australian Canoe Federation
Kew, Vic

Readers' letters are welcome. A selection will be published in this column. Letters of less than 200 words are more likely to be published. Write to the Editor, *Wild*, PO Box 415, Prahran, Victoria 3181.



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For further information write to PO Box
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5671.

The Victorian Climbing Club meets at
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month (except December); and second
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Glenferrie Street, Glenferrie 3161.
Visitors and new members interested in
rockclimbing are welcome. Contact the
Secretary, GPO Box 1725P, Melbourne,
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The Winter Group is a social cross
country ski club which meets on the
second Tuesday of each month during
winter at the Australian Conservation
Foundation, 1st floor, 672B Glenferrie
Road, Glenferrie at 7.30 pm.

Meetings are very informal and
usually include films and guest
speakers on XC skiing, mountaineering
and other winter alpine activities.

Visitors and new members welcome.
Contact the President, 30 Indra Road,
Blackburn 3130 or telephone
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WildShot



Photo Steve Gailman.
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